Customer satisfaction: a comparison of community college and department of employment security operated WIN Job Centers in Mississippi

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CUSTOMER SATISFACTION: A COMPARISON OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE AND DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT SECURITY OPERATED WIN JOB CENTERS IN MISSISSIPPI

By

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A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of Mississippi State University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Community College Leadership in the Department of Leadership and Foundations

Mississippi State, Mississippi

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CUSTOMER SATISFACTION: A COMPARISON OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE AND DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT SECURITY OPERATED WIN JOB CENTERS IN MISSISSIPPI

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The purpose of this study was to determine if there were any significant differences in customers’ opinions of WIN Job Center One-Stop Career Centers operated by community colleges compared to customers’ opinions of Job Center One Stop Career Centers operated by Mississippi Department of Employment Security. Specifically, this study was concerned with the following variables: facilities, staff professionalism, staff services, self-services, and an overall service rating.

A survey design was employed in this investigation to collect and analyze the data. A total of 116 WIN Job Center customers participated in this empirical study. An instrument entitled “Customer Satisfaction Survey” was used to gather the data. The instrument was adapted from an existing survey used by the North Carolina Employment
Security Commission. The instrument was tested for internal consistency and the Cronbach alpha coefficient was .86.

The data were tested for significance through the application of the One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), a 2 X 2 Analysis of Variance, and a 2 X 4 Analysis of Variance with the Studentized Range Test. Among the conclusions of this study were the following: it appeared that customers who utilized the Mississippi Department of Employment Security were more satisfied with the self-service resources than those who utilized the community college WIN Job Centers. Another notable significance was shown when including the variable of the times that the customer had utilized the WIN Job Centers. The data revealed that those customers who were using the WIN Centers for the first time were more satisfied with the overall services of community college centers; however, customers who were using the job center for 2-5 times were more satisfied with overall services from the Mississippi Department of Employment Security job centers. Finally, the data also displayed that the customers who had a higher level of education (i.e. 2 or more years of college) were more satisfied with the WIN Job Centers overall than those with a high school diploma or less.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The Employment and Training Administration of the United States Department of Labor is responsible for creating and implementing a national workforce investment program that facilitates workers and employers to achieve the competitive edge in the current and ever-changing future economy (U.S. Department of Labor, 1998a). Historically, community colleges have been one of the leaders in training for the nation’s workforce system. Relationships between a variety of federal training programs and community colleges have been in existence for several years.

Workforce development has evolved through several national programs such as the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act Amendment (CETA) of 1978 and the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) of 1982 to the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 (WIN in Mississippi, n.d.). The WIA program is the nation’s most comprehensive effort at streamlining public employment services, job training, education programs and agencies into a systematic approach that addresses the skill needs of today’s economy (WIN in Mississippi). WIA 1998 combines workforce development programs and partnering public agencies under one umbrella to create the One-Stop System. This one-stop system was created to best serve both the employers and individuals with
employment needs so that the demands of the ever-changing workforce can be met effectively (WIN in Mississippi).

America’s growing economy is constantly changing and advancing. Some workers need new skills to succeed. Two-thirds of America’s economic growth in the 1990’s resulted from the introduction of new technologies and 60% of the new jobs of the 21st century require post-secondary education, which is only held by one-third of the American workforce (CREATE, 2003). Not enough workers are being trained quickly enough to take advantage of the new jobs that are created, or these workers do not know which avenues to pursue in order to find these jobs. The Federal government has provided millions of dollars in workforce training programs like the current Workforce Investment Act of 1998 legislation to address employment issues.

The WIA program is measured by eight common performance measures, which provide constant feedback on program implementation. An additional measure, customer satisfaction, is included to provide information on customer opinions of services received and facilities. Customer satisfaction is critical to the One-Stop’s success. Continuous improvement, customer satisfaction, and employee satisfaction and involvement are becoming the standard across all levels of government (Scheuing & Christopher, 1993). One-Stops were developed to serve the public, and like all service industries, customer satisfaction is the key to successful execution. A primary element of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 is customer satisfaction; therefore, the legislation was designed to value and utilize customers’ opinions to improve the quality and delivery of services provided within the one-stop (U.S. Department of Labor, 1998a). The Mississippi One-
Stop Career Centers that are associated with the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 are known as the Workforce Investment Network, or WIN in Mississippi (Barbour, 2006).

**Problem Statement**

The value of the WIA program and One-Stop centers is largely dependent on the customers’ opinions of the facilities and services that are provided by the staff within the centers. The only way to systematically gather customer opinions and provide feedback for improvement of the WIN centers in Mississippi is to develop a customer satisfaction system. This system should measure both quantitative and qualitative performance based on customer satisfaction measures (U.S. Department of Labor, 1998b). Currently, Mississippi does not have a customer satisfaction system in place.

There are currently 56 WIN Job Centers in the state of Mississippi (Mississippi Department of Employment Security, 2006). Mississippi Department of Employment Security is the One-Stop operator for 44 centers, while three of Mississippi’s community colleges are the One-Stop operator 12 centers (Mississippi Department of Employment Security). During the years of 2002 to 2004, customer satisfaction cards were located within the community college-operated WIN Job Centers for customers to provide feedback. However, in 2004, it was determined by the Mississippi Partnership local workforce area that the cards would no longer be implemented.

The Workforce Investment Act designed the one-stop system to provide customers with the ease of getting multiple services in one location. The legislation gives guidelines on services to offer and mandated partnerships to be located within the centers,
but the actual design and delivery of the one-stop services is left up to the state and the local workforce boards. Although the legislation focuses on customer service, customers were not given the opportunity to provide opinions or expectations of the services, facilities, or mandated partnering agencies that should be included within the one-stops.

Now that the system has been in place for several years, it is imperative to inquire on how the services are being delivered according to the customer. Within Mississippi, there are two operating agencies – Mississippi Department of Employment Security and community colleges. With two entities acting as one-stop operators, the question must be addressed: Is customer satisfaction higher from community college-operated WIN Job Centers? This question must be addressed in order to provide the best services to help our businesses recruit and keep skilled employees, as well as helping our working class obtain skills and training to have better, higher paying jobs (Barbour, 2006).

There is a vital role that is played by good schools and a well-educated population in promoting local economic and community development activities (Gibbs, 2005). Education attainment in rural America reached a historic high in 2000, with nearly one in six rural adults holding 4-year college degrees, and more than three in four completing high school (Gibbs). Education is measured as the percent of the adult population (25 years and older) that has a high school or higher degree (Goetz & Rupasingha, 2005).

As the employment sectors change into jobs that require workers with higher education levels, many rural policy makers have come to view local educational levels as a critical determinant of employment and economic growth in their communities (Evelyn, 1999). Gibbs (2005) stated that having community colleges involved with the one-stop
career centers is helpful in attracting employers who can provide higher-skill jobs and promote the importance of educational levels. This combination would provide a successful development strategy for the local economy.

In 2006, The Institute for the Study of Family, Work, and Community of Berkeley, California, prepared a report that provided further rationale for this study (Visher & Fowler, 2006). This report studied challenges that community colleges face while being involved with the Workforce Investment Act. The study identified that community colleges, if not the one-stop operator, have trouble determining which organizations should provide services to those customers from the disadvantaged populations. In addition, the data reported that these community colleges were very limited in the services that they could offer outside of training services for customers. The data from this study identified that there is a lack of cooperation between agencies, which is a potential hindrance to one-stops and consequently have an effect on the delivery of quality services within those centers (Visher & Fowler). Visher and Fowler acknowledged in their report, “When colleges view WIA as a relatively small but important part of their larger workforce development approach and treat WIA as a means to an end rather than an end in itself, both the colleges and WIA agencies seem to work more effectively together. Colleges operating One-Stops tend to integrate WIA more successfully into their overall workforce development efforts.” (p. 47, 48).
Conceptual Framework

The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 is a program that strives to empower customers by providing resources to make informed choices that meet employment goals, it is important to measure the level of satisfaction of the customer after he received services from the one-stop centers (U.S. Department of Labor, 1998b). In theory, the amount of resources available, community involvement, staff development, and training options provided by community colleges would show a higher customer satisfaction rating for community college-operated WIN Job Centers when compared to Mississippi Department of Employment Security-operated WIN Job Centers.

Purpose

The purpose of the research was to review customer satisfaction to determine if there were any significant differences in customers’ opinions of WIN Job Center One-Stop Career Centers operated by community colleges when compared to customers’ opinions of WIN Job Center One-Stop Career Centers operated by the Mississippi Department of Employment Security using a comprehensive customer satisfaction survey.

Research Questions

In order to determine if there are differences between the levels of customer satisfaction of customers that received services from a WIN Job Center operated by
community colleges compared to Mississippi Department of Employment Security, the research was guided by the following four research questions:

1. Are there any significant differences in customer satisfaction with the facilities between the two data sets?
2. Are there any significant differences in customer satisfaction with the staff professionalism between the two data sets?
3. Are there any significant differences in customer satisfaction in the staff-assisted services offered between the two data sets?
4. Are there any significant differences in customer satisfaction with the self-services between the two data sets?
5. Are there any significant differences in customer satisfaction ranking of the overall services between the two data sets?
6. Is there a significant interaction between education status of participant and the overall ranking of customer satisfaction between the two data sets?
7. Is there a significant interaction between the number of times the participant utilized the WIN Job Center and the overall satisfaction ranking between the two data sets?

**Key Terms**

The following terms/variables were operationally defined for purposes of providing clarity and understanding relative to the focus of the present research study.
• Community College: Any institution regionally accredited to award the associate in arts or the associate in science as its highest degree (Cohen & Brawer, 2003).

• Customer: Individuals that purchase or use goods or services from another individual or entity.

• Customer Satisfaction: The measure of how products and services supplied by the two data sets meet or surpass the expectations of the individual job/training seekers.

• Data Sets: Information provided for each group studied. Two data sets were used in this study: 1. Community College Operated WIN Job Centers, 2. Mississippi Department of Employment Security Operated WIN Job Centers.

• Local Workforce Investment Boards (WIB): The local governing structure for the implementation of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA).

• Mississippi Department of Employment Security: The Mississippi agency responsible for labor exchange and federal programs such as Wagner-Peyser Act, Unemployment Insurance, and Workforce Investment Act of 1998.

• One-Stop Career Center: The federal term given to the States’ creation of conveniently located, comprehensive centers for employment and training access and labor market information.

• One-Stop Operator: The entity the coordinates service providers within the center while providing vision and goals for the center.
• **Self Services:** Materials available for use within the WIN Job Centers with little or no assistance needed from staff. Materials may include Internet, career inventory software, job postings, and copy/fax machines.

• **State Workforce Investment Board:** Group of individuals from small and large businesses that assist the Governor in meeting federally mandated responsibilities under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 and ensures that the vision for an effective workforce development system is realized.

• **Workforce Investment Network (WIN):** System which includes comprehensive WIN Job Centers that provide federal, state and community workforce development programs and services in the state of Mississippi.

• **Workforce Investment Act (WIA):** Federal legislation authorizing state and local communities to develop a new workforce delivery system that provides a comprehensive range of workforce development activities which promote an increase in the employment, job retention, earnings, and occupational skills improvement by participants.

**Limitations**

The researcher identified the following limitations with this study:

1. The study only utilized data from WIN Job Center customers in Mississippi. The findings and recommendations are limited to this population only.

2. All WIN Job Center customers were not surveyed. Only those customers who chose to complete the survey were included in this study.
3. The results are limited to the knowledge and perceptions of the services offered by the WIN Job Centers.

4. The results are limited by the attitude and honesty of the participants completing the questionnaire.

5. The results are limited to the time the study took place.

6. The results are limited by the reliability and validity of the questionnaire.

**Delimitations**

The researcher identified the following delimitations with this study:

1. This research design is limited to the customer satisfaction rankings of the job-and/or training-seeker only, and not the employer customer satisfaction rankings.

2. The survey data were compiled by surveys that were completed and collected voluntarily on-site at the WIN Job Centers.

3. The study does not seek to find, or verify, relationships among all variables.

4. This study only focuses on customer satisfaction.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter reviews literature associated with this research study. It begins with a review on the history of federal workforce training programs and continues with specific topics on the Workforce Investment Act, Mississippi’s model for one-stop career centers, the role of community colleges in workforce training, and customer satisfaction in service industries.

History of Federal Workforce Training Programs

Employment and training programs in the United States have evolved through several legislative incarnations since the early 1960s (Feldman, 1998). The Manpower Development and Training Act of 1962 (MDTA), the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act of 1973 (CETA) and the Job Training Partnership Act of 1982 (JTPA) were all major landmarks in the history of these programs (Feldman).

Federal job training assistance is targeted primarily at four groups: disadvantaged adults voluntarily seeking employment services, disadvantaged youth, dislocated workers, and welfare recipients (Reville & Klerman, 1996). The primary goal for all of the previous federal workforce training programs was employment or employment with wages above the poverty level or above the self-sufficient wage. As this goal was achieved, hypothetically, there would be fewer people dependent on welfare and
government assistance programs. Over the past decades, the federal workforce training programs have consolidated in an effort to accommodate the roles of the federal and local governments, as well as, to include the demands of employers.

The first major federal job training program, the Manpower Development and Training Act (MDTA), was enacted in 1962 (Feldman, 1998). The MDTA was a significant program in that it changed the way that vocational education was viewed. It gave the Department of Labor the opportunity to provide non-traditional training for adults outside the school system, including:

- single-occupational classroom training;
- referrals to vocational and technical schools; and
- subsidized on-the-job training

(Human Resources and Social Development Canada [HRSDC], 1998)

Because MDTA did not address the needs of adults, it was subsequently followed by the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, which created the Job Corps, and the Work Incentive Program (WIN) in 1967, which provided training to welfare recipients (Feldman, 1998). The Job Corps Program targeted disadvantaged youths with a large number of programs such as counseling, education and training, health care, and work experience. In 1966, the Job Corps Program served 40,600 persons at a cost of $37,000 per participant (Lalonde, 1995). The welfare-to-work programs required certain welfare recipients to actively seek and gain employment and/or participate in training programs. These programs required the participant to participate or be denied welfare benefits. In 1971, in an attempt to assist with the rise of unemployment, the government created the
Emergency Employment Act, which created more jobs within the public sector (HRSDC).

The Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) was the first attempt at a collaboration of various programs under the MDTA. CETA was enacted in December 1973 (Franklin & Ripley, 1984). Title I of CETA gave the local officials the power to administer and operate the combined programs. The money for the programs was distributed to states and local governments in the form of block grants from the federal government (Guttman, 1983). The local officials had the responsibility for deciding who should receive training, what types of training would be provided, and how the training was provided. Programs under CETA targeted low-income unemployed and economically disadvantaged persons (HRSCD, 1998). Services funded through CETA included on-the-job training, classroom training, and public service employment. Public service employment was a program of federally subsidized jobs and proved to be the most controversial aspect of CETA (Franklin & Ripley).

The distribution formula for the CETA funding was intended to divide administrative responsibilities and release local control, which was supposed to allow the programs to be responsive to local conditions (Franklin & Ripley, 1984). This was the first step that the federal government made in order to allow more responsibility for job training to be delegated to states and local governments.

The Job Training Partnership Act of 1983 (JTPA) replaced CETA and further devolved responsibility to the states (Long, 1985). Similar to its predecessor, the purpose
of JTPA was to provide job training programs or economically disadvantaged adults and dislocated workers and others facing serious employment barriers.

Although CETA and JTPA had similar program goals, there were a number of changes with JTPA. The JTPA program had a substantially smaller budget than any previous workforce training program, and ultimately became more of a training program rather than a program that provided both training and subsidized employment. Another change with the program was the formal commitment to partnership between public and private sectors in order to attain the goals of the program (Lalonde, 1995). JTPA was managed by a partnership between local elected officials and appointed representatives of the private sector or members the Private Industry Council (Long, 1985). The Office of the Governor in each state carried out many of the functions, which were previously handled by the federal Department of Labor.

A Review of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998

The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) (P.L. 105-220), was enacted in August of 1998 (Clark, 1999). All states were required to implement Title I by July 1, 2000. WIA repealed the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) and replaced it with an employment and training system for adults, dislocated workers, and youth. It is locally focused but has greater mobility and discretion in the use of program dollars (Clark, 1999). A “one-stop” service delivery system is mandated in this legislation, which integrates a broad array of employment and training programs (U.S. Department of
The WIA program was different than previous programs because was streamlined to address the needs of individuals and employers.

The basis of this workforce system is the “one-stop” service delivery. One-stop centers that consolidated offices of the mandated partnering agencies under one roof began cropping up across the nation. The centers could now offer a variety of services, but most notably the employment security system acts as the primary job-finding source, especially for eligible unemployed workers who receive cash benefits while temporarily out of work (Mississippi Department of Employment Security, n.d.). The one-stop concept was created to make employment needs more conveniently addressed for individuals. With the new system, an individual only has to travel to one location to file an unemployment claim, if applicable, and then receive assistance with finding employment. In the event that the individual cannot find employment, is underemployed, or is in need of training services, the options are available such as on-the-job training, individual training account tuition vouchers, or adult basic education (U.S. Department of Labor, 1998a).

In his congressional report, Lorderman (2003) pointed out that under the current law, the state Workforce Investment Board, which functions as an advisory body to the Governor, includes: the Governor; members of the state legislature; chief elected officials; representatives of state agencies responsible for the programs carried out by one-stop partner, business, and labor organizations; and individuals and representatives of organizations having experience with youth.
A main function of the state WIB is to assist the Governor in determining the local workforce area (U.S. Department of Labor, 1998a). The state WIB will develop a state WIA plan for implementing the program and offer guidance on continuous improvement of the program. The state is divided into local workforce areas. Within the local workforce area, a local workforce board is certified by the Governor, which has responsibilities for developing a local workforce investment system with local autonomy to create procedures, based on the WIA law, to customize services of the local one-stops (Pantazis, 1998b). The local WIB’s must develop a local plan, select and implement Memorandum of Understanding with entities designated as one-stop operators, identify eligible training providers, develop and administer budgets and grants, overseeing the system, and negotiating performance measures for the state (Pantazis). While the implementation of the WIA program was being planned out, the community colleges were given the initial opportunity to become one-stop operator. Itawamba Community College was the first community college to agree to this daunting responsibility. Northeast Community College and Northwest Community College quickly followed. Throughout the rest of the state, Mississippi Department of Employment Security took on the role of one-stop operator.

Youth, adult and dislocated worker programs are the state administered programs currently running under the WIA law. Separate formulas for funding of these programs come to the state and then allocated out to the local workforce areas based on population and labor market statistics (Mississippi Department of Employment Security, n.d.). The operations of the programs within the one-stop centers are administered by the best
available operator – often determined by inner-local agreements under a 5-year commitment with the Local WIB. According to Gehldof (2000), the major elements of the WIA program that the one-stop operators are to ensure are:

- **Increased coordination** – to encourage joint ventures with emphasis on coordination of plans, programs and activities to improve services and to avoid duplication.
- **One-stop delivery systems** – to conveniently deliver choice of services to participants and link the new workforce development system to the employer; over twelve federal workforce development programs will be represented in one-stop service delivery systems.
- **Universal access** – to make assessment, counseling, job search assistance, and information on job prospects available to everyone. Access to intensive services and job training is based on eligibility with priority given to the recipients of public assistance or low-income individuals.
- **Work first** – to help individuals gain employment as the first stage of service delivery and prior to offering training.
- **Empowered customers** – to give customers the ability to make informed choices that meet their employment goals by providing easy access to a wealth of labor market information, information on the performance of training providers, and the use of individual training accounts (tuition vouchers).
• Increased flexibility – to meet local training needs and use available resources more creatively through partnerships with local governments and boards to develop systems that are responsive to the needs of the workforce and businesses in the local labor market.

Individuals eligible from the programs offered through the one-stop services are classified as adults (18 years and older), dislocated workers – individuals who have been laid off or received notice of termination and are unlikely to return to the same occupation and/or they have gained employment but not yet recovered the wage at layoff, and individuals who are classified as youth – fourteen to twenty-one years of age – who are low-income individuals that have additional identifiers (U.S. Department of Labor, 1998a).

The WIA funded services for individuals through the one-stop system are classified into a 3-tier customer flow (WIN in Mississippi, n.d.). Core services are the basic services that are offered to all individuals. Individuals at the core level receive self-service access to job listings, information on the current labor market (local and nationally), and receive very little career counseling or assistance from the one-stop staff (U.S. Department of Labor, 1998a). Intensive services are offered to those individuals who have a difficulty in finding or retaining employment and need additional staff assistance. Intensive services may include addressing employment ethics, life-skill training, case management, interview preparation and practice, and aptitude and interest assessments to help determine a career path (U.S. Department of Labor). All of these services are required to be documented on an Individual Employment Plan. The third tier
of service is the training level. Training is available to individuals who cannot or have not maintained employment through the other service levels and require additional skills to gain employment (U.S. Department of Labor). Training services may include On-the-Job Training, Individual Training Account Tuition Vouchers, or possibly classroom-based skills training (Pantazis, 1998b).

**Mississippi’s Model for One-Stop Career Centers**

The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 provides the framework for the Workforce Investment Network or WIN in Mississippi concept, as titled by former Governor Ronnie Musgrove. In his 2000 press release, Musgrove stated, “WIN Job Centers are the centerpiece of the new workforce investment system. The new program stimulates economic development as we focus on attracting new companies to Mississippi and growing existing business through Advantage Mississippi initiatives.”

Under the WIN concept, the Employment Security Commission (currently known as Mississippi Department of Employment Security) joined together with other state and federal agencies, including community colleges, to provide the customer a wide variety of services under one roof. Each center is equipped with computers with Internet access, copy machines, public telephones and fax machines in order to provide the customer with resources to conduct self-directed job searches. The centers originally began in the Employment Security offices. However, part of the WIN concept was that the centers would be continually updated in order to meet the needs of the customers and the local community. Many WIN Job Centers have currently expanded, remodeled, or relocated from the original job service office.
In Mississippi, there were originally six local workforce areas (see Figure 1) that were condensed down four workforce areas (see Figure 2) by Governor Haley Barbour in 2004. The local boards of supervisors in each area establish a Workforce Investment Board composed of local businesses and public sector representatives, who design their local WIN in Mississippi programs based on community needs (WIN in Mississippi, n.d.).
Figure 1  Six Original Local Workforce Areas in Mississippi
Figure 2  Four Local Workforce Areas in Mississippi
The WIN Job Centers are the nucleus of services that should address any and/or all barriers that a person might have to reaching unsubsidized employment. The centers not only provide resources for the job seeker, but they are also expected to provide a staff of professionals that is trained to identify employment needs and find opportunities for the individuals.

Businesses and individuals are both considered customers of the WIN Job Center. Businesses are provided services including free job postings, a large pool of available and skilled workers, free referrals and screenings, and information about and referral to on-the-job training programs that reduce the cost of training new employees (WIN in Mississippi, n.d.). Individuals can take advantage of the services offered such as creating or updating resumes, conducting job searches, and preparing for job interviews.

The Workforce Investment Network is designed to implement the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 by providing convenient, one-stop employment and training services to employers and job seekers (WIN in Mississippi, n.d.). By combining federal, state, and community workforce programs and services into physical locations and most recently virtual locations, WIN in Mississippi is a system that is both convenient and user-friendly (WIN in Mississippi.).

The Role of Community Colleges in Workforce Development

The potentially strongest agency to influence the economic success of rural communities is the rural community college. These institutions provide workplace skill
instruction, occupational training, literacy instruction, liberal education, vocational education, and transfer education (Cohen & Brawer, 2003). And while these services have specific goals, they tend to also influence how rural citizens see themselves and the pride they have or do not have in their community (Miller & Tuttle, n.d.).

Rural community colleges are increasingly becoming known for their role in economic development and job training activities. These institutions not only provide instruction, training, and possible opportunities for the local workforce, but they also provide a sense of ownership of the community to the individuals (Feldman, 1998). Workforce development has emerged as the most important component that two-year colleges should focus on while forming strong alliances with local businesses (Evelyn, 1999).

The rural community college is a mechanism that has a tremendous ability to influence the attitude and self-identity of potential workers (Miller & Tuttle, n.d.). Policy makers at the local, state, and national level need to be aware of the impact rural community colleges have on their citizens.

In particular, policy makers should consider the following:

- Economic development activities need to be preceded by social programs that increase feelings of self-worth and work ethic.
- State and federal agency officers and college leaders need to be aware of the unintentional outcomes of their programs and may need to explore ways to evaluating their effectiveness.
• Community college governing boards and leaders should develop an understanding and appreciation for the difficult work of maintaining and fostering service area relationships.

• If legislators are interested in developing industry in rural areas, they should invest in rural community colleges to prepare a workforce well in advance of the placement of the business.

• Institutions should examine their self-image and how various constituents view their image.

• Collaborative programs with local public schools and four-year universities, funded by state legislatures who have an interest in improving their state’s competitiveness, will prove helpful in creating an expectation for education. (Miller & Tuttle)

It is crucial that policymakers understand the important role that community colleges play in economic development. These institutions not only provide a way for new industry to relocate to the area, but a way of sustaining existing industry with proper training to be able to maintain the competitive edge (Feldman, 1998). Technical and community colleges have the opportunity to connect employers and potential employees (Simone, 2001).

Advances in technology and international competition have formulated the new economy (Deming, 1982). This economy dictates the occupations and labor skills needed in today’s workplace. The upgrading of job skills and educational requirements puts rural communities at a disadvantage since rural counties generally have lower educational
levels among the adult population (Barkley, Henry, & Li, 2005). Barkley et.al, stated, “Manufacturing-based counties with more highly educated labor maybe attractive locations for high technology manufacturing firms that require skilled workers; yet, a high-skill, high-wage labor force likely discourages manufacturing firms that are seeking locations with low labor costs.”

Residents, state legislators, and policy makers have viewed rural community colleges as change agents who are responsible for sustaining quality of life opportunities and employment for rural America (Miller & Tuttle, n.d.). These community colleges not only provide crucial educational opportunities for the local people, but they also provide job training, and small business support, as well as become an integral part of the community (Spangler, 2006). Businesses are more likely to be located within communities with a community college that can provide training incentives. (Miller & Tuttle.)

Today’s comprehensive community college is not only a provider of academic instruction but is a provider of vocational education and specific skill training with programs that target specific adult populations (Kasper, 2002). Community colleges are able to respond to the local economic climate and offer a variety of services that can assist with economic development within the local community. These activities include providing instruction for training and opportunities to increase education level with GED assessments, contract and on-the-job training, and local economic development planning (Young, 1997). Through these services, community colleges try to maintain and improve the local economy of the counties that they serve.
Customer Satisfaction

In today’s environment of global competition, industries understand that they will no longer remain operational if they do not meet the expectations of the customer with the best possible service delivery (Deese, 2002; Osbourne & Gaebler, 1992). Customer service and customer satisfaction are two terms that are often confused. Customer service is what you do for your customer and the method you employ to do it; customer satisfaction is how your customer responds to the service provided (Montgomery, 2006).

Every business or entity has one main objective – to satisfy its customers. A high-level of customer satisfaction can only add to the success of every business. It is estimated that nearly one half of American business is built upon the informal, “word-of-mouth” communication (Gitomer, 1998; Reck, 1991). When an individual receives good service and is happy with an experience, he will typically share that positive experience with approximately 10 more people (Reck).

Poor customer satisfaction is detrimental to a business’ success. If a customer receives poor customer service and is not satisfied, he will convey his dissatisfaction with the business to almost twenty others (Reck, 1991). The cost of gaining a new customer is ten times greater than the cost of keeping a satisfied customer (Gitomer, 1998). If a customer has a bad experience and discusses his experience with others, the negative effects on a business can last for years (Gitomer; Reck).

For a business to receive high levels of customer satisfaction, the business must first know and understand what the needs and expectations of services are of the
customer. This information is not only necessary for successful business, but also for understanding and improving customer satisfaction.

Assessments of customer satisfaction are important tools for the administration of all organizations, especially those delivering public services. Any program that addresses systemic reform or enhancements in quality must first understand both the expectations of the customer and the level to which those expectations are being met (Deming, 1982; Hayes, 1998; Zeithaml, Parasuraman, and Berry, 1990).

Customer satisfaction is crucial to the success of today’s service industries. But, for many government agencies, customer satisfaction is a relatively new concept (John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development, 2002). The satisfaction of the customer has not been addressed by the employment and training programs of the past. These governmental entities assumed that the programs were meeting the needs of the customers (U.S. Department of labor, 1998b). Osbourne and Gaebler (1992) stated that most American governments are turn a blind eye to customer satisfaction, while private sector companies are more focused on the customer. Executive Order #12862 that was issued by President Clinton on September 11, 1993, changed the way that public-organizations viewed customer satisfaction (Myers, 1999). This order required federal government agencies to establish standards that address customer service and customer satisfaction which would parallel expectations of the most successful businesses. President Clinton identified customer satisfaction as the change agent in federal government management (Myers).
Until the implementation of the WIA program, customers of employment and training programs were not viewed as major components of the design of program implementation or as a measure of the success of the programs (U.S. Department of Labor, 1998b). The WIA program puts customers first by including customer satisfaction as one of the measured performance objectives. This program models how government is moving more towards meeting the needs of the customers and allowing customers to take ownership of their success in the program (U.S. Department of Labor). Businesses in the private sector have understood the importance of the customer. If there are no customers, then the business will not survive. Although customers do not pay for the services provided by the WIA program, they are crucial to the continued funding and success of this program.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the research was to determine if there were any significant differences in customers’ opinions of WIN Job Center One-Stop Career Centers operated by community colleges compared to customers’ opinions of WIN Job Center One-Stop Career Centers operated by the Mississippi Department of Employment Security. This was done using survey that is created specifically for this study. The survey was validated by a panel of experts and tested for reliability.

This chapter describes the research methods employed in this study. These methods include the validity and reliability of the instrument, the population, selection of subjects, data collection, and the data analysis approach that were used.

Research Design

The research design utilized in this study was a descriptive survey design. Fraenkel and Wallen (2003), describe that a descriptive survey involves asking the same set of questions of a large number of individuals. The big advantage of this type of research is that it can provide a lot of information from a large sample of individuals (Fraenkel & Wallen). Fraenkel and Wallen state list three major characteristics that most surveys possess:
• Information is collected from a group of people in order to describe some aspects or characteristics of the population of which that group is a part.

• The main way in which the information collected is through asking questions; the answers to these questions by the members the group constitute the data of study.

• Information is collected from a sample rather than from every member of the population.

**Population**

The population for the study included 116 WIN Job Center customers, randomly selected by WIN Job Center staff at comprehensive one-stops, which represented the four workforce areas of Mississippi. The surveys were implemented during the months of April and May 2008. The Mississippi Department of Employment Security provided a list of comprehensive one-stops for the state and notified all branch managers of the study. Prior to beginning this study, the researcher received prior approval from Mississippi State University’s Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects. All forms and letters of approval were completed and in hand before any surveys were administered. The Mississippi Department of Employment Security also agreed to allow the researcher to conduct the research.

**Selection of Subjects**

Comprehensive one-stops or WIN Centers were the sites selected for this study. These comprehensive one-stops are located throughout the state and were divided by
workforce area to give a good representation of the four workforce areas throughout the state. Three community colleges are currently one-stop operators; they are all located within the Mississippi Partnership Workforce Area. The other operator, Mississippi Department of Employment Security, is the operator for all WIN Job Centers in the remaining three workforce areas. All of the community college-operated WIN Centers were chosen to participate in this study based on the willingness of the administration to participate in the data collection process. All of the community college sites were chosen because they are comprehensive one-stops. Comprehensive one-stops were selected because they provide the largest variety of services, serve the largest number of individuals, and community college employees are located within the centers on a full-time basis.

Instrumentation

A comprehensive review of literature assisted the researcher in creating the instrument by locating an existing customer satisfaction survey that was utilized in a similar study conducted in North Carolina by Deese (2002), in her unpublished dissertation: “Customer Satisfaction: A Comparison of Community College and Employment Security Commission hosted JobLink Centers in North Carolina.” Bob Collett of the North Carolina Employment Security Commission granted the researcher permission to use and adapt the original survey for this study. The Customer Satisfaction Project team of North Carolina developed the original survey with the assistance of a consultant from the University of Maryland. The actual survey is located in Appendix A.
The questions in the survey were designed to gather information from the opinions of the customers about the services that they received from the WIN Job Centers, operated by the two different organizations. Not only did the survey address the services offered and utilized, but the facilities were also surveyed.

The researcher chose to use the questions from an existing survey where validity was already determined. However, due to slight adaptation, the researcher further reviewed for validity using a panel of experts to review the questions and content. The panel included five panelists: Cathy Gilliam, WIA Bookkeeper/WIA Case Manager Assistant/WIA Computer Training Instructor for Itawamba Community College at the Tupelo WIN Job Center; Gary Golden, WIA Adult Programs Coordinator at Three Rivers Planning and Development District; Barbara Hicks, Staff Officer II, Customer Services Division at Mississippi Department of Employment Security; Pat Masur, WIA Individual Training Account Coordinator with Itawamba Community College; Rhonda Stevens, WIA Case Manager Assistant, Resource Room Coordinator/Receptionist with Itawamba Community College at the Tupelo WIN Job Center.

Internal consistency or reliability of the instrument was conducted by finding the Cronbach alpha coefficient. Cronbach's alpha is an index of reliability associated with calculating the reliability of items that are not scored right versus wrong (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). Alpha coefficient ranges in value from 0 to 1 and may be used to describe the reliability of factors obtained from multi-point formatted questionnaires or scales (i.e., rating scale: 1 = very dissatisfied, 5 = very satisfied) (Fraenkel & Wallen). The higher the score, the more reliable the scale is. Nunnaly (1978) has indicated 0.7 to
be an acceptable reliability coefficient. The alpha for this instrument was computed at .86.

**Data Collection**

The method in collecting data for this study began by requesting assistance from the Mississippi Department of Security; Dr. Gary Lee Spears, Northwest Community College President; Dr. David Cole, Itawamba Community College President; and Dr. Johnny Allen, Northeast Community College President in administering the survey to a required number of individuals that utilized the WIN Job Centers during the allotted time period. The response letters granting permission are located as Appendix B. Each one-stop that participated in gathering the survey results, gave the survey to customers as they completed the services offered during an appointment or visit. The individuals voluntarily completed the surveys. Customers were read the survey letter as well as given a copy of the letter indicating the purpose of the study and how the data was to be used and stored. A copy of the letter stating the purpose and anonymity of the study that was read to the survey respondent is located in Appendix C.

The survey contained questions that gathered information on customers’ opinions about the facilities, staff professionalism, and services (staff-assisted and self-services). The survey results were compared between the Mississippi Department of Employment Security operated one-stops and the community college operated one-stops.

Once the surveys were administered, the branch managers forwarded the surveys to the researcher. The researcher entered the individual survey responses into the
Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The data were securely stored until the completion of the time period allotted to collect the survey results. After the data were entered and coded into the SPSS program for review, the surveys were destroyed. The survey results were combined by entity of operation (MDES or CC) and a comparison of the variance of mean scores was made. Comparisons were made concerning the data elements, which produced conclusions to address the research problem and to also provide areas for further research.

**Data Analysis**

Analyzing customer satisfaction data for this study was completed using descriptive and inferential statistics. This approach allowed the researcher to analyze the research questions. The percentage of the total sample responding to each item on the survey questionnaire was reported, as well as the percentage of the total sample that chose each alternative for each question (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003).
CHAPTER IV
ANALYSIS OF DATA

The purpose of this study was to determine if any significant differences were present in customers’ levels of satisfaction of WIN Job Centers operated by community colleges compared to customers’ levels of satisfaction of WIN Job Centers operated by Mississippi Department of Employment Security. Specifically, the researcher was concerned with the following variables: facilities, staff professionalism, staff services, self-services, and overall service ratings. Answers to the following questions were sought:

1. Are there any significant differences in customer satisfaction with the facilities between the two data sets?
2. Are there any significant differences in customer satisfaction with the staff professionalism between the two data sets?
3. Are there any significant differences in customer satisfaction in the staff-assisted services offered between the two data sets?
4. Are there any significant differences in customer satisfaction with the self-services between the two data sets?
5. Are there any significant differences in customer satisfaction ranking of the overall services between the two data sets?
6. Is there a significant interaction between education status of participant and the overall ranking of customer satisfaction between the two data sets?

7. Is there a significant interaction between the number of times the participant utilized the WIN Job Center and the overall satisfaction ranking between the two data sets?

The sample consisted of randomly selected customers who utilized the six selected WIN Job Centers in Mississippi during the months of April and May in 2008. The selected WIN Job Centers administered a total of 20 surveys each. The survey was broken up into two groups of question. The first section contained five subsets, which examined the major research questions formulated for this investigation. The second section contained the demographic profile of the participants in this study, which was utilized as a variable in the last two research questions of the study. Not all of the information gathered was utilized in the analyses for this study. Out of 120 surveys distributed, 116 were completed and returned.

The data for research questions one through five were tested using a One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Because these questions only compare two groups, post hoc tests were not conducted. The data for research question six were tested using a 2 X 2 ANOVA. The data for research question 7 were tested using a 2 X 4 ANOVA with the Studentized Range test to determine where differences might exist.
Demographic Profile of the Participants in the Study

There were 120 individuals who participated in this study. They were described descriptively by gender, age, race, education level, number of visits to the WIN Center, and employment status.

Gender

Regarding the gender of the individuals participating in this study, 50 (43.1%) were male, and 66 (56.9%) were female. See Table 1 for these results.

Table 1

Frequency Distribution of Participants in the Study by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>43.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>56.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Age

For this empirical study, the sample was divided into five different age groups. There were 4 participants in the 19-20 year group, 49 in the 21-30 year group, 34 in the 31-40 year group, 16 in 41-50 year group and 13 in the Over 51 group. The percentages for each of the respective age groups are 3.4, 42.2, 29.3, 13.8, and 11.2. Table 2 includes these findings.
Table 2
Frequency Distribution of Participants in the Study by Age Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19-20</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-30</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>42.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>29.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 50</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Race

The survey instrument divided race into six categories for this study. There were 51 Caucasian, 65 African-American reported for the study. Hispanic, Asian, American Indian, and Other categories had no respondents reported. The percentage of the racial groups was 44.0 Caucasian, 56.0 African-American. See Table 3 for these results.
Table 3

Frequency Distribution of Participants in the Study by Racial Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>44.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>56.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>116</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Education Level*

The variable education status was categorized into five distinct groups for this study. There were 7 (6.0%) respondents that had less than a high school education. There were 80 (69.0%) that had earned a GED or high school diploma. Respondents with higher education were also included in this study. There were 21 (18.1%) with a two-year degree, and 6 (5.2%) with a four-year degree. The category labeled “other” had 2 (1.7%) respondents. See Table 4 for these analyses.
Table 4

Frequency Distribution of Participants in the Study by Education Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than High School</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Diploma or GED</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>69.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two-Year Degree</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>18.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four-Year Degree</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Visits to WIN Center

The frequency of visits or uses of the WIN Job Centers is broken down into four categories for the present study. The survey results included 27 (23.3%) respondents were visiting the WIN Center for the first time. A total of 54 (46.6%) had been to the WIN Center for 2-5 times. There were 17 (14.7%) who had been to the WIN Centers 6-10 times, and 18 (15.5%) respondents had visited the WIN Centers 11 or more times. See Table 5 for the results.
Table 5

Frequency Distribution by Number of Visits to WIN Center

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Visits</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Time</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>23.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-5</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>46.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 or more</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Employment Status

Regarding the employment status of the individuals included in this study, 89 (76.7%) were unemployed, looking for employment, or seeking training info. There were 26 (22.4%) that were employed but seeking better employment or training. One participant (0.9%) reported an employment status of other. The results are included in Table 6.
Table 6

Frequency Distribution by Employment Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment Status</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed, looking for employment or training info</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>76.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed, looking for better employment or training</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>22.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examination of Research Question One

Are there any significant differences in customer satisfaction with the facilities between the two data sets?

Reported in Table 7 are the ANOVA results of customer satisfaction levels of facilities of individuals utilizing the WIN Job Centers operated by community colleges and Mississippi Department of Employment Security. No significant differences were found between the two data sets regarding customer satisfaction of WIN Job Center facilities ($F(1,114) = 1.625, p > .05$).
Table 7
Analysis of Variance Summary Table Regarding the Customer Service Responses of WIN Job Center Facilities between MDES and CC Operated Centers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variance</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>4.686</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.686</td>
<td>1.625</td>
<td>.205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>328.649</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>2.883</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>333.334</td>
<td>115</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examination of Research Question Two
Are there any significant differences in customer satisfaction with staff professionalism between the two data sets?

Reported in Table 8 are the One-Way Analysis of Variance results regarding the customer satisfaction in regard to staff professionalism of the two data sets. A statistically significant difference was not found between the two data sets on customer satisfaction with staff professionalism ($F(1,114) = .825, p > .05$).

Table 8
Analysis of Variance Summary Table Regarding the Customer Service Responses of WIN Job Center Staff Professionalism between MDES and CC Operated Centers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variance</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>2.656</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.656</td>
<td>.825</td>
<td>.366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>367.044</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>3.220</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>369.701</td>
<td>115</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Examination of Research Question Three

Are there any significant differences in customer satisfaction in the staff-assisted services offered between the two data sets?

Presented in Table 9 are the One-Way ANOVA findings regarding the customer satisfaction with the staff-assisted services between the two data sets. There was no statistically significant difference between the two data sets on services offered via WIN Job Center Staff ($F(1,114) = 1.310, p > .05$).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variance</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>$F$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>5.631</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.631</td>
<td>1.310</td>
<td>.255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>490.173</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>4.300</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>495.804</td>
<td>115</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examination of Research Question Four

Are there any significant differences in customer satisfaction with self-services between the two data sets?

Conveyed in Table 10 are the results of the One-Way ANOVA conducted on the self-service customer satisfaction responses. Statistically significant differences were found between the two data sets on customer satisfaction with self-services at the
surveyed WIN Job Centers \( (F(1,114) = 6.890, p < .05) \). The means of the two data sets proved that customers were more satisfied with self-services offered at the Mississippi Department of Employment Security \( (M = 28.67) \) than those offered by community college operated WIN Job Centers \( (M = 27.85) \).

### Table 10

Analysis of Variance Summary Table Regarding the Customer Service Responses of WIN Job Center Self-Services between MDES and CC Operated Centers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variance</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>( F )</th>
<th>( p )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>19.608</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>19.608</td>
<td>6.890</td>
<td>.010*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>324.419</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>2.846</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>344.028</td>
<td>115</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Significant at the \( p < .05 \) level

### Examination of Research Question Five

Are there any significant differences in customer satisfaction ranking of the overall services between the two data sets?

Depicted in Table 11 are the One-Way ANOVA results of customer satisfaction with the overall services offered and delivered between the two data sets. No significant differences were found between the community college WIN Job Centers overall services and the MDES WIN Job Centers’ overall services \( (F(1,114) = 1.22, p > .05) \).
Table 11

Analysis of Variance Summary Table Regarding the Customer Service Responses of WIN Job Center Overall Services between MDES and CC Operated Centers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variance</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>.040</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.040</td>
<td>.122</td>
<td>.727</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>36.788</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>.323</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>36.828</td>
<td>115</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examination of Research Question Six

Is there a significant interaction between education status of participant and the overall ranking of customer satisfaction between the two data sets?

Data were screened to ensure that the assumptions of factorial ANOVA were fulfilled. To better interpret data, subjects were transformed into two groups – high school education or less and college (2-year or 4-year degree) because of the very small number of people in the extreme groups (i.e. less than high school and 4-year degree). A 2 X 2 factorial ANOVA was conducted; a summary of results is presented in Table 12. Although the interaction between education level and region (MDES or CC) was not statistically significant ($F(1,116) = 1.113, p > .05$), there was a statistically significant difference across educational groups. In order to determine where the significant difference was, the means of the two groups were analyzed and are displayed in Table 13. Results reveal that individuals with college education were more satisfied than those
whose education level was high school diploma or less. A post hoc test on education is not necessary, since this variable only has two categories.

Table 12
2 X 2 Analysis of Variance Summary Table Regarding the Customer Service Responses of WIN Job Center Overall Services between MDES and CC Operated Centers by Education Level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variance</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Region</td>
<td>.168</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.168</td>
<td>.541</td>
<td>.464</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>1.625</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.625</td>
<td>5.230</td>
<td>.024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region * Education</td>
<td>.346</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.346</td>
<td>1.113</td>
<td>.294</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 13
Means of Education Level across Regions (MDES and CC)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High School or Less</td>
<td>4.6207</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>.61458</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td>4.8966</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>.30993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4.6897</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>.56590</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examination of Research Question Seven

Is there a significant interaction between the number of times the participant utilized the WIN Job Center and the overall satisfaction ranking between the two data sets?

The data for this question were screened, and all assumptions for a factorial ANOVA were met. A 2X4 ANOVA was conducted; a summary of results is presented in
Table 14. The data revealed that there was an interaction between number of times people visited the WIN Job Center and region \( (F(3,116) = 3.225, p < .05) \).

Table 14

2 X 4 Analysis of Variance Summary Table Regarding the Customer Service Responses of WIN Job Center Overall Services between MDES and CC Operated Centers by Times Visited the WIN Center.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variance</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Region</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>.012</td>
<td>.911</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Times Visited</td>
<td>1.107</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.369</td>
<td>1.210</td>
<td>.310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region * Times</td>
<td>2.949</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.983</td>
<td>3.225</td>
<td>.025</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A Studentized Range post hoc test was conducted by comparing the Mississippi Department of Employment Security and Community College operated centers for each number of times visited level to determine which groups were significantly different. Results reveal that customers, on their first visit to the community college WIN Job Centers, were more satisfied than those who were visiting a MDES WIN Job Center for the first time. However, customers who had visited the MDES WIN Job Centers for 2-5 times were more satisfied than those who had visited CC WIN Job Centers for the same amount of times. There was no statistical significance for the other two groups (6-10 times and 11+). Figure 3 displays the results of the means for the groups.
Figure 3   Satisfaction Level Means by Times Visited WIN Center by Region
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS
AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine if any significant differences were present in customers’ levels of satisfaction of WIN Job Centers operated by community colleges compared to customers’ levels of satisfaction of WIN Job Centers operated by Mississippi Department of Employment Security. Specifically, the researcher was concerned with the following variables: facilities, staff professionalism, staff services, self-services, and overall service ratings.

A survey design was utilized in this investigation to collect and analyze the data. One hundred sixteen (116) WIN Job Center customers participated in this study. An instrument entitled “Customer Satisfaction Survey” was used to gather data for this empirical study. The North Carolina Employment Security Commission validated the investigative instrument. Permission to use this instrument was granted by Bob Collett of the North Carolina Employment Security Commission.

The data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The following research questions were tested at the .05 level of significance in this experimental investigation:
1. Are there any significant differences in customer satisfaction with the facilities between the two data sets?

2. Are there any significant differences in customer satisfaction with the staff professionalism between the two data sets?

3. Are there any significant differences in customer satisfaction in the staff-assisted services offered between the two data sets?

4. Are there any significant differences in customer satisfaction with the self-services between the two data sets?

5. Are there any significant differences in customer satisfaction ranking of the overall services between the two data sets?

6. Is there a significant interaction between education status of participant and the overall ranking of customer satisfaction between the two data sets?

7. Is there a significant interaction between the number of times the participant utilized the WIN Job Center and the overall satisfaction ranking between the two data sets?

**Findings**

Based on the results of this study, the following findings were observed:

1. The level of customer satisfaction in regards to facilities (including hours of operation, location of the center, appearance of the center, and privacy) was not significantly different by operator (MDES or CC).
2. The level of customer satisfaction in regards to staff professionalism (including friendliness, prompt service, politeness, and urgency to assist customers) was not significantly different by operator (MDES or CC).

3. The level of customer satisfaction in regards to staff-services (including wait time, helpful services, how well staff met customer needs) was not significantly different by operator (MDES or CC).

4. The level of customer satisfaction in regards to self-services (including materials provided, wait time to use materials, how easy to find material to use) was significantly different by operator (MDES or CC). Findings proved that customers were more satisfied with the self-services available at the Mississippi Department of Employment Security operated WIN Centers.

5. The level of customer satisfaction in regards to overall service ranking was not significantly different by operator (MDES or CC).

6. The variable of education status did not have a significant difference on the level of customer satisfaction in regards to overall service ranking by operator (MDES or CC). No interaction by region was determined; however, there was a significant difference across the region. Respondents with some form of college education were more satisfied with the overall services of the WIN Job Centers collectively.

7. The variable of times visited the WIN Center did have a significant difference on the level of customer satisfaction in regards to overall
service ranking by operator (MDES or CC). Respondents who were utilizing the WIN Center for the first time were more satisfied with the community college operated centers; however, respondents who had utilized the centers for 2 to 5 times were statistically more satisfied with the Mississippi Department of Employment Security WIN Centers.

Conclusions

Customer satisfaction is a “self-assessment made by consumers concerning perceptions of how well services have fulfilled their needs” (Sander, Stevenson, & Coates, 2000: 309). It is the degree to which customer expectations about an agency or service are met or exceeded (Rust & Oliver, 1994; Zeithaml, et al, 1990).

The facilities between the two data sets were not significantly different in regard to customer satisfaction levels. Community colleges and the Mississippi Department of Employment Security have made great strides over the last few years to work as a team to renovate, relocate, or improve the WIN Job Centers. The respondents in this study were equally satisfied with all aspects of the facilities.

The respondents in the study did not report a difference in customer satisfaction levels with staff professionalism, staff services, or overall services between the two data sets. This data suggests that the staff development and training that has been conducted collaboratively by both entities has been successful. The customer ultimately wants to receive services that meet his expectations. Because of a “cross-training” approach that was adopted in 2005 by the Mississippi Department of Employment Security and
community college operators, the customers receive services from a WIN Job Center employee that is trained to be a representative of both entities.

There was a significant difference between MDES and CC self services. This is an interesting finding because customers were more satisfied with self-services offered at the Mississippi Department of Employment Security WIN Job Centers, as displayed in the results section of this study. Self-services include the materials available for use with minimum or no staff assistance. These materials are typically located in the resource rooms of the WIN Centers and can include computers, self-assessment career inventories, online access to job openings, software to develop résumés, fax machines, telephones, and copy machines.

One of the most interesting findings of this study was the significant difference in customer satisfaction by customers with a college education compared to those with a high school education or less. Although there wasn’t a significant interaction within the two data sets (MDES or CC), there was a notable difference for this variable across the study. It was interesting to review that the respondents with some college education found that the WIN Job Centers met their satisfaction better than the respondents that have a high school education or less. This could be due the fact that more job and training opportunities exist for those with a higher level of education; therefore, those respondents felt that their employment needs were addressed and met by the center.

The results of this study demonstrate that a significant difference exists in the level of customer satisfaction of overall services between the two data sets (MDES and CC) based on the number of times that the respondent had utilized the WIN Job Center.
The data from this study revealed that respondents who were visiting or using the WIN Job Center for the first time, were more satisfied with the community college WIN Job Centers. However, the data also shows that respondents who had utilized the WIN Job Centers for 2 to 5 times were more satisfied with Mississippi Department of Employment Security WIN Job Centers.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

Based on the findings of this study, there are several recommendations for further research. First, in order to correctly measure customer satisfaction, the expectations of the customer must be established. In order to learn what customer expectations are of the services offered at a WIN Job Center, customers should be interviewed and responses recorded and tabulated.

The data from this study was only gathered from six comprehensive WIN Job Centers throughout the state. To obtain more information and a wider range of customer satisfaction with the WIN system in Mississippi, the study should be replicated to include all WIN Job Centers located within the state. This data could provide more information, which would allow a closer examination of the perceived effectiveness of centers that are not comprehensive and/or part-time centers.

This study did not separate the respondents and look at data according to the service level that the individual was receiving. A study that analyzes customer satisfaction of those individuals who are receiving services within the WIA Youth program, WIA Core, Intensive, and/or WIA Training components would be beneficial to administrators of those programs respectively. Further improvements on the delivery of
services could be made using information from a study that analyzes customer satisfaction with levels of service. This study did not include those variables as part of the research.

Finally, the individual customers were surveyed in this study but there has not been a published study conducted that analyzes customer satisfaction levels of business customers. The business customers of a WIN Job Center are the direct link to the success of the programs that are offered to individual customers. If business customers are unsatisfied with the WIN Job Centers, it is unlikely that the centers will be successful.
REFERENCES


Gitomer, J. (1998). Customer satisfaction is worthless, customer loyalty is priceless: How to make customers love you, keep them coming back, and tell everyone they know. Austin, TX: Bard Press.


Miller, M., & Tuttle C. (n.d.) How rural community colleges develop their communities and the people who live in them. [policy brief]. Meridian, MS.


APPENDIX A

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY
Customer Satisfaction Survey

Please read each statement below and give your opinion by checking one box in the rating section. If a statement does not apply to you, please mark the *DOES NOT APPLY* box and then go to the next statement. Please complete the survey and return to the WIN Job Center staff. Thank you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RATING (Check One)</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Satisfied</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Dissatisfied</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does Not Apply</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Part A: FACILITIES**

Please rate the center on the following items:

1. How the center looked...
2. The amount of privacy you received so you could speak freely with the staff...
3. The hours of operation of the center...
4. The location of the center
5. How easy it was to find and get the services you needed within the building

**Part B: STAFF**

Please rate the staff who served you on the following items:

1. How quickly you were served...
2. How friendly the staff was to you...
3. How respectfully/polite were you greeted...
4. How well the staff helped you in finding services or information you needed.
5. How well did someone assist you in the resource room while you were waiting...

**Part C: SERVICES**

Please rate the services you received on:

1. How easy it was to get the services you needed...
2. How long you had to wait to receive the services you needed...
3. How well the services provided met your needs...
4. How helpful was the information provided to you...
5. The overall rating of staff assisted services would be...
**Part D: Self-Service Facilities**  
(If you did not use self-service facilities – skip to Part E.)  
Please rate the self-service facilities including access to the Internet on . . .

| 1. How easy equipment and materials were to use . . . |
| 2. How easy it was to get the information you needed... |
| 3. How helpful was the information to you . . . |
| 4. The length of time you waited to use the resources and/or materials |
| 5. The amount of materials available for self-service |
| 6. Staff’s knowledge of resources in the resource room/area |

**Part E: Overall Rating of Service(s)**

1. Please rate your overall experience with the WIN Job Center Services . . .

**Part F: Demographics**

(Please check the appropriate boxes)

1. Gender:  
   - □ Male  
   - □ Female

2. Age:  
   - □ 19-20  
   - □ 21-30  
   - □ 31-40  
   - □ 41-50  
   - □ over 51

3. Race:  
   - □ White  
   - □ African-American  
   - □ Hispanic  
   - □ Asian  
   - □ American Indian  
   - □ Other (please describe)  

4. Education Status: (Please check the highest education received)  
   - □ Less than High School  
   - □ 2-year college degree  
   - □ High school or GED  
   - □ 4-year bachelor’s degree  
   - □ Other (please describe)  

5. How many times have you visited the WIN Job Center?  
   - □ First Time  
   - □ 2-5 times  
   - □ 6-10 times  
   - □ 11 or more times

6. Are you currently:  
   - □ Unemployed, looking for employment or training information  
   - □ Employed, looking for better employment or training information  
   - □ other (please describe)  

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APPENDIX B

PERMISSION LETTERS FROM ORGANIZATIONS
March 6, 2008

Mrs. Meredith Park  
7569 Winners Circle West  
Southaven, MS 38671

Dear Meredith:

This letter is to grant permission for you to conduct dissertation research within the WIN Job Centers in the Itawamba Community College district including Tupelo, Pontotoc and Amory.

I wish you much success as you continue your doctoral studies.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

David C. Cole, Ph.D.  
President
February 21, 2008

Ms. Meredith Park
7569 Winners Circle West
Southaven, MS 38671

Dear Ms. Park:

This correspondence is to advise that the Mississippi Department of Employment Security has agreed to approve your Dissertation request to conduct a survey regarding the customer satisfaction level of WIN Job Center customers.

If additional information is required, please contact my office at 601.321.6569

Sincerely,

Richard S. McMorris
Director, Office of Customer Operations

RSM/bh
March 24, 2008

Mrs. Meredith Park
7569 Winners Circle West
Southaven, MS 38671

Dear Meredith:

I am pleased to learn that you are continuing to pursue your doctoral studies. You have my permission to conduct a portion of the research for your study at our WIN Job Center in Corinth. It will be helpful to all of us to know the degree to which our clients are satisfied with the services offered at this and other centers.

I hope you have much success in implementing your research study.

Sincerely,

Johnny L. Allen, Ed.D.
President

Copy  Nadara Cole
      Nelson Wall
March 26, 2008

Ms. Meredith Park  
7569 Winners Circle West  
Southaven, MS  38671

Dear Ms. Park:

This correspondence is to advise that Northwest Mississippi Community College has agreed to approve your Dissertation request to conduct a survey regarding the customer satisfaction level of WIN Job Center customers at the DeSoto County WIN Job Center.

If we may be of further service, please advise.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Dr. Gary Lee Spears  
President  
Northwest Mississippi Community College  
4975 Highway 51 North  
Senatobia, MS  38668  
(662) 562-3227  
gispears@northwestms.edu
APPENDIX C

CUSTOMER SURVEY LETTER
Dear WIN Job Center Customer,

My name is Meredith Park and I am conducting a survey among WIN Job Center customers. I worked at a WIN Job Center for a number of years, and am currently writing my dissertation at Mississippi State University, and need your help. My dissertation research is designed to analyze the level of customer satisfaction that WIA participants have with WIN Job Centers in Mississippi. It specifically looks at how satisfied participants are with the facilities, staff, and services provided. The information collected will be able to provide valuable feedback about your experiences that may lead to suggestions for improvements/modifications.

Please take a minute to read this consent form and complete the enclosed survey; it should take no longer than 10 minutes of your time. Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may decline to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed, your data will be returned to you or destroyed.

Your responses will be held in the strictest of confidentiality, so please feel free to respond as openly as possible. You are welcome to skip any question you do not wish to answer. The records will be kept strictly confidential. Data will be stored securely and will be made available only to persons conducting the study unless you specifically give permission in writing to do otherwise. No reference will be made in oral or written reports, which could personally link you to the study.

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact the researcher, Meredith Park at 662-397-0799, or via email at meredithlpark@yahoo.com.

If you choose to participate in this study, please return your completed survey to a WIN Job Center employee or your case manager.

Sincerely,

Meredith Park

Doctoral Student

Mississippi State University
APPENDIX D

IRB CERTIFICATION LETTER
March 11, 2008

Meredith Park
7869 Winners Circle
Southaven, MS 38671

RE: IRB Study #08-067: Customer Satisfaction: A Comparison of Community College and Department of Employment Security Operated WIN Job Centers in Mississippi

Dear Ms. Park:

The above referenced project was reviewed and approved via administrative review on 3/11/2008 in accordance with 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2). Continuing review is not necessary for this project. However, any modification to the project must be reviewed and approved by the IRB prior to implementation. Any failure to adhere to the approved protocol could result in suspension or termination of your project. The IRB reserves the right, at anytime during the project period, to observe you and the additional researchers on this project.

Please refer to your IRB number (#08-067) when contacting our office regarding this application.

Thank you for your cooperation and good luck to you in conducting this research project. If you have questions or concerns, please contact irb@research.msstate.edu or 325-3294.

Sincerely,

Katherine Crowley
Assistant IRB Compliance Administrator

cc: Dr. James Davis