



**THE INFLUENCING FACTORS OF CLIENT SATISFACTION WITH
LAW FIRMS — A CASE STUDY OF ZHONGTONG LAW FIRM IN
BEIJING**

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**AN INDEPENDENT STUDY SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
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This Independent Study has been approved as a Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Business Administration

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Title: The Influencing Factors of Client Satisfaction with Law Firms –
A Case Study of Zhongtong Law Firm in Beijing

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ABSTRACT

With the rapid development of the economy, the demand for high-quality legal services in emerging fields is increasing. The single-form traditional legal services can no longer satisfy the diversified needs of clients. The high density of law firms and the intense competition in the legal services market require continuous improvement in law firms' service satisfaction to maintain a competitive edge.

The purpose of this study were: 1) To explore the key factors influencing client satisfaction with Zhongtong Law Firm; 2) To examine the impact of service quality, brand image, and lawyer competence on client satisfaction with Zhongtong Law Firm. This study selected Zhongtong Law Firm in Beijing as a case study and adopted a quantitative research method. Client data were collected through a survey with a sample size of 200 respondents.

The results of the study indicate that: 1) client satisfaction with law firms is influenced by the firm's brand image, service quality, and lawyer competence. 2) These three factors have a significant positive impact on client satisfaction with law firms.

Studying client satisfaction with law firms helps enrich and enhance the satisfaction with legal services provided by law firms, offering more competitive legal services to clients seeking legal assistance.

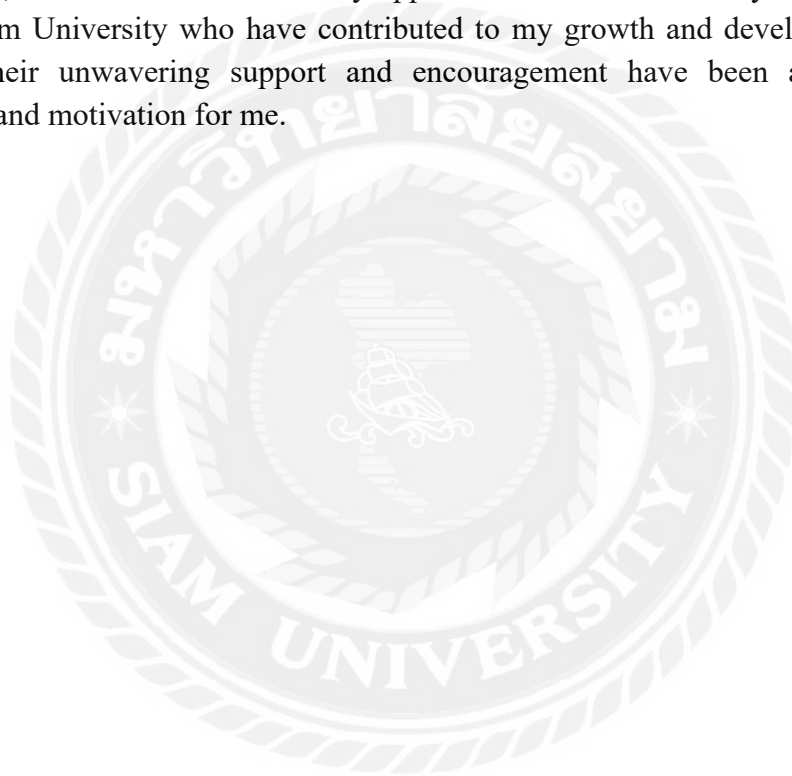
Keywords: law firm, client satisfaction, influencing factors

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Xu JunLin

DECLARATION

I, XU JUNLIN, certify that the work embodied in this, independent study entitled “The Influencing Factors of Client Satisfaction with Law Firms —A Case Study of Zhongtong Law Firm in Beijing” is a result of original research and has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other university or institution.

Xu Junlin
SEP 14, 2024



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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

With the advancement of China's "Belt and Road" policy, there has been a push towards the internationalization of legal services, opening the doors for legal services across various countries (Liu, 2016). This presents a rare opportunity for law firms, but it also comes with greater challenges. As the economy rapidly develops and new fields continue to emerge, the traditional single-form legal services can no longer meet the increasingly diversified needs of clients. As a fundamental component of the legal system, both lawyers and law firms are facing significant challenges amid industry transformation (Wang & Zhao, 2018).

The number of large corporate law firms is steadily increasing, particularly in first-tier cities such as Beijing and Shanghai. Enhancing service quality and increasing brand recognition are crucial for law firms to maintain a competitive edge in the complex legal services market (Yan, 2019).

Generally, a licensed lawyer, or even a law student from a university, can have viewpoints comparable to those of a seasoned lawyer if they possess sufficient information and evidence (Yan, 2019). In such cases, how can lawyers ensure that clients choose them? Clients not only require their lawyer to possess satisfactory technical skills, but often make decisions based on their emotional perceptions, with trust arising from subjective feelings (Wang & Zhao, 2018). Therefore, the trust established between clients and law firms often does not solely stem from legal opinions or defense strategies, but rather from the subjective experiences presented by the firm. Maintaining a high-quality relationship with clients is crucial for continuously improving client satisfaction. This approach allows to consider clients' subjective feelings and emotions. It can explain why many clients are willing to pay higher fees for familiar lawyers and why established lawyers and firms consistently receive cases (Tu & Fu, 2017).

1.2 Questions of the Study

This study aims to address the following research questions:

1. What are the key factors affecting client satisfaction with law firms?
2. Do brand image, service quality, and lawyer competence have a positive impact on client satisfaction with Beijing Zhongtong Law Firm?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

This study is based on an analysis of client satisfaction with Zhongtong Law Firm in Beijing. It aims to identify factors affecting client satisfaction during the provision of legal services and to develop client management strategies that can enhance the firm's competitiveness. By addressing the diverse needs of clients, the study seeks to improve

client satisfaction, thereby boosting the profitability of Zhongtong Law Firm and ensuring its long-term development in the legal services industry. The specific research objectives are summarized as follows:

1. To explore the key factors influencing client satisfaction with Beijing Zhongtong Law Firm.
2. To examine the impact of service quality, brand image, and lawyer competence on client satisfaction with Beijing Zhongtong Law Firm.

1.4 Scope of the Study

This study focuses on Beijing Zhongtong Law Firm as the primary research subject. The structural equation modeling analysis selected for this study was based on the covariance matrix, making the parameter estimation and goodness-of-fit chi-square test highly sensitive to sample size. Based on the ratio of sample size to observed variables, a total of 200 questionnaires were distributed.

The questionnaires were targeted at clients who had previously collaborated with Beijing Zhongtong Law Firm, and due to the nature of legal services, questionnaires were distributed via email, WeChat, and face-to-face interactions over a period of two and a half months. A total of 200 questionnaires were sent out, and 192 were received. After reviewing the responses and excluding invalid questionnaires, 188 valid ones were left, resulting in an effective rate of 94%. The data analysis was conducted using SPSS after the questionnaires were collected.

1.5 Significance of the Study

First, by exploring the main factors influencing client satisfaction with Beijing Zhongtong Law Firm, this research offers practical guidance for the collective development of the legal profession. As the legal services market gradually opens up, the entry of foreign capital, technology, and services presents the legal industry with the severe challenge of "internationalizing the domestic market while domestic competition becomes international." At the same time, the attributes and positioning of China's legal profession have evolved with the political, economic, and cultural demands of the times. As the primary participants in legal services, client satisfaction directly affects the survival and development of law firms. In this context, this study aims to identify the issues and causes of client service satisfaction at law firms and propose strategies to enhance client satisfaction with Beijing Zhongtong Law Firm.

To gain a greater competitive advantage and profit share in the fiercely competitive legal market, law firms must adjust their service strategies with the goal of achieving comprehensive client satisfaction. This will help them secure a stronger service advantage in the competitive market, contributing to a healthier and more prosperous industry. Achieving a win-win and collaborative development between law firms and clients is of significant practical relevance.

Second, this study helps to foster long-term development by continuously improving practices from the client's perspective, thereby enhancing the firm's

visibility and practical significance within the industry. In the service sector, client satisfaction determines the survival space and future direction of law firms. Therefore, acquiring and maintaining client satisfaction has become a crucial source of competitiveness for law firms today.

This study synthesizes relevant literature and theories to outline the research approach to client service satisfaction with Beijing Zhongtong Law Firm. Based on a questionnaire survey and statistical analysis, it identifies issues and their causes regarding client service at the firm, ultimately proposing strategies for improving client service satisfaction. On one hand, this study encourages Beijing Zhongtong Law Firm to allocate its internal resources effectively, ensuring that disappointed clients are satisfied, thereby stabilizing its client base and ensuring long-term development. On the other hand, by examining a case study of Beijing Zhongtong Law Firm, this research enriches the study of client service satisfaction within the legal profession and explores how client satisfaction theories can be applied in this field. Lastly, it is hoped that this study will serve as a reference for other law firms aiming to improve their client service satisfaction.

1.6 Definition of the Key Terms

1. Law Firm

The term "law firm", in the legal sphere, usually refers to the working institutions where lawyers in the People's Republic of China carry out their duties and conduct their business activities. These institutions may receive instructions from legal persons, legal persons or other organisations to provide them with professional legal services within the limits prescribed by law (Han, 2005). These services include, but are not limited to, representing complaints and charges in all types of litigation cases, accepting commissions to act as legal counsellors, accepting all types of non-litigation legal representation, as well as answering enquiries about the law and writing litigation and related legal documents on behalf of lawyers (Han, 2005).

2. Service Quality

The quality of a law firm's services refers to the extent to which it provides legal services that meet the needs of its clients and ensure the accuracy, timeliness and professionalism of its legal services (Tu & Fu, 2017). This includes the performance of lawyers in answering legal enquiries, representing litigants and writing legal documents, as well as their efficiency and transparency in communicating with clients and providing feedback on the progress of cases (Lu, 2012).

3. Brand Image

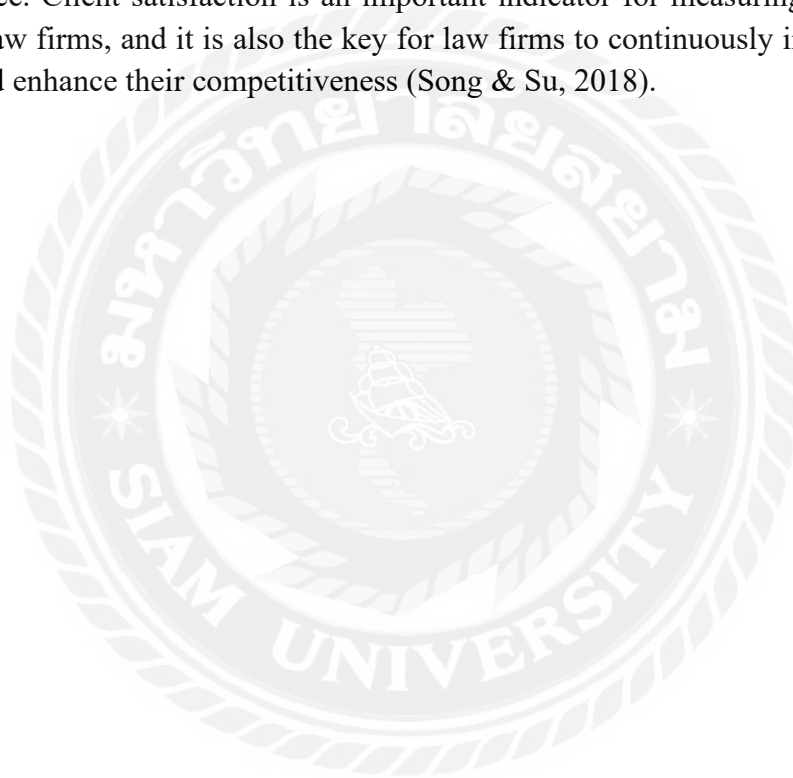
The brand image of a law firm is a comprehensive reflection of its market positioning, service characteristics, professional competence and social responsibility (Zhang, 2015). A good brand image can enhance the visibility and credibility of a law firm, attract more potential clients and enhance the loyalty of existing clients. It reflects the image and reputation of a law firm in the public mind.

4. Lawyer Competence

Lawyers' competence is the professionalism, legal knowledge, defence skills and communication skills demonstrated by lawyers in their legal services. This includes the lawyer's familiarity with the legal provisions, his or her ability to analyse the facts of the case (Mei, 2000), his or her advocacy skills in court, and his or her ability to communicate and coordinate with the client and other participants in the proceedings. Lawyers' competence is the basis for law firms to provide high-quality legal services (Mei, 2000).

5. Client Satisfaction

Client satisfaction is the subjective evaluation by clients of the legal services provided by a law firm. It reflects the client's satisfaction with the lawyer's service, acceptance of the outcome of the case and recognition of the overall quality of the law firm's service. Client satisfaction is an important indicator for measuring the service quality of law firms, and it is also the key for law firms to continuously improve their services and enhance their competitiveness (Song & Su, 2018).



Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter begins by defining brand image, service quality, and lawyer competence. It explores the client satisfaction theory and the service quality evaluation model theory as the foundational theories for this study. The review primarily employs a literature synthesis approach to analyze the main factors affecting client satisfaction. By organizing and analyzing the literature, it briefly reviews the basic theories and relevant attributes, aiming to understand the relationship between this research and existing studies, grasp the development context of the research, and establish a theoretical foundation for subsequent studies. The following are some of the key concepts and theories discussed:

2.2 Literature Review

This study explores the factors affecting client satisfaction with law firms based on the service marketing 7Ps theory and the client satisfaction theory. By employing a literature review approach, it aims to clarify the influencing factors of client satisfaction.

2.2.1 Service Quality

Service quality refers to the effect of the service and the comprehensive performance of the service process to meet the needs of clients. In the service process, client satisfaction is the minimum standard of service quality for the enterprise to serve the target clients (Lu, 2012). Service level, target clients, and consistency, are the key indicators defined by service quality standards (Song & Su, 2018). Service quality is a comparison between clients' expected service quality and perceived service quality. Expected service quality is the degree of client's psychological expectation of the service provided by the service company, while perceived service quality is the actual level of client's perception (Fan, 1999). If the client's perceived level of service is consistent with the psychological expectations or higher than the desired level, the client will obtain a higher degree of satisfaction that the enterprise's service quality is better. It can be seen that the expected level of service quality determines the client's perception of the overall service quality (Lu, 2012). If the client's expectations are too high and unrealistic, the client will perceive the company's service quality as lower even if the level of service received by the client is objectively high (Fan, 1999). Expected quality is affected by the following factors: First, market communication, including advertising, promotional activities, etc. This factor is directly under the control of the enterprise. The second is corporate image and client word of mouth, which are controlled by the firm. The third is client demand, a factor not controlled by the firm (Song & Su, 2018). The ever-changing needs of clients and different consumption habits make this factor play a big role in determining the level of expected service.

Client-perceived service quality can be compared based on clients' expectations of service compared to their actual perceptions of service outcomes. Client perceptions and expectations are primarily reflected in five aspects: tangibles, reliability, assurance, empathy, and responsiveness. Tangibles include physical facilities, equipment, and the appearance of service personnel. Reliability refers to the ability to perform services reliably and accurately as promised. Responsiveness refers to the willingness to help clients and improve service levels promptly. Assurance involves the knowledge, courtesy, and ability of staff to convey confidence and credibility. Empathy refers to caring for clients and providing personalized service (Song & Su, 2018).

The study emphasizes the important role of personnel in the service process, expanding the original service interaction model by viewing clients as co-producers and focusing on how interactions between clients affect service quality (Fan, 1999). Starting from empirical research in hospitals, there is a greater emphasis on the practical utility of service quality research for business managers (Lu, 2012). Research on service quality in China still largely involves digesting and absorbing foreign research, with a focus on empirical studies in specific industries.

Integrating quality, functional quality, and output quality (Xu, 2017) validates the universality of basic service quality theories and helps improve measurement scales for service quality, providing better guidance for service-oriented enterprises.

2.2.2 Brand Image

The brand image of a law firm is the comprehensive image it presents to the outside world, including its professionalism, credibility, client service, market positioning, social responsibility and innovative spirit (Shi, 2023). A successful brand image not only attracts potential clients, but also maintains a leading position in a competitive market. Brand image refers to the overall perception, feelings, and evaluations that the public holds about a brand. It represents the brand's image and reputation in the market (Zhang, 2015). For law firms, brand image embodies their competitiveness and attractiveness in the legal services market. The elements that constitute brand image mainly include brand positioning, brand communication, consumer demands, and industry competition (Shi, 2023).

Firstly, brand positioning forms the foundation of brand image shaping. Law firms need to clearly define their market position and target client groups to establish a unique brand image in the market. Secondly, brand communication is crucial for enhancing brand image. Law firms need to choose suitable communication channels and methods to convey their brand image to target client groups, thereby enhancing client awareness and trust in the brand. Additionally, consumer demands and industry competition are important factors influencing brand image. Law firms need to pay attention to changes in consumer demands, adjust and optimize their brand image in a timely manner to adapt to market changes (Zhang, 2015).

Secondly, the brand image is centred on professional rigour. As a professional law firm, the professionalism and rigour of legal services are important to clients. Therefore, it has an elite team composed of senior lawyers and young talents, who not only have

profound theoretical background in law, but also have rich practical experience (Shi, 2023). When dealing with all kinds of legal affairs, we always uphold a rigorous attitude and conduct in-depth research and analysis of every detail to ensure that we provide the most accurate and comprehensive legal advice to our clients, and enhance their sense of trust and reliance on us (Xu, 2017).

2.2.3 Lawyer Competence

Lawyer competence forms the foundation for law firms to provide high-quality legal services and is a key factor in shaping their brand image (Mei, 2000). Lawyer competence primarily includes professional knowledge, practical experience, communication skills, and ethical standards.

Firstly, professional knowledge and practical experience are the core of lawyer competence. Lawyers need to possess solid legal knowledge and extensive practical experience to deliver professional and efficient legal services to clients. These abilities and qualities not only affect the operational level of law firms but also directly influence their brand image and reputation (Mei, 2000).

Secondly, communication skills and ethical standards are also crucial aspects of lawyer competence. Lawyers need to have excellent communication skills and ethical integrity to build good relationships with clients, earning their trust and respect (Song & Su, 2018). These abilities and qualities are equally important for enhancing the brand image and reputation of law firms.

In conclusion, service quality, brand image, and lawyer competence all play crucial roles in the development of law firms (Song & Su, 2018). Law firms need to focus on shaping their brand image and enhancing lawyer competence to improve their competitiveness and market position. Moreover, law firms should actively monitor market trends and changes in client demands, continuously adjusting and optimizing their service quality, brand image, and lawyer team structure to adapt to market changes and meet client needs (Zhang et al., 2019).

2.3 Theory Basis

2.3.1 Theory of Service Quality Evaluation Model

The Servqual Model, a service quality evaluation model, was proposed in 1985 by renowned experts in the field of service marketing (Parasuraman et al., 1985). This model evaluates service quality by measuring the gap between clients' expectations and actual service experiences. The core idea of the Servqual Model is that the level of service quality depends on the difference between clients' expectations and actual service experiences (Parasuraman et al., 1985).

The Servqual Model divides service quality into five dimensions:

Reliability: Refers to the ability of an enterprise to reliably and accurately fulfill service commitments. For example, whether a law firm can complete legal tasks within the agreed timeframe and deliver accurate results.

Responsiveness: Refers to the ability of an enterprise to help clients and provide prompt services. In legal services, this is reflected in whether the lawyer can promptly

respond to clients' inquiries and concerns and act quickly in urgent situations.

Assurance: Refers to the employees' knowledge and courtesy, as well as their ability to convey trust and confidence. In a law firm, this is reflected in whether the lawyer possesses professional legal knowledge, is client-oriented, and can provide clients with sufficient confidence and support.

Empathy: Refers to the ability of an enterprise to care for and provide personalized attention to clients. This requires lawyers to not only focus on legal matters but also address clients' psychological and emotional needs, providing humanized care and support.

Tangibles: Refers to the tangible presentation of the enterprise's service, such as facilities, equipment, employee appearance, etc. Although legal services are intangible, the office environment of the law firm, employees' dress, and appearance can also influence clients' perceptions and satisfaction.

Applying the Servqual Model to a client satisfaction study at Beijing Zhongtong Law Firm can start from the above five dimensions. Through comparative analysis, key factors affecting client satisfaction can be identified, and improvement measures can be proposed accordingly (Parasuraman et al., 1985).

For example, in response to high client expectations of law firms in terms of "reliability", but the actual experience is lower, the law firm can strengthen internal management, enhance the standardization and refinement of service processes, and ensure improvements in both service quality and efficiency (Parasuraman et al., 1985). Similarly, for issues related to "Empathy" and "Responsiveness," the law firm can strengthen employee training and cultural development to improve employees' service awareness and adaptability.

The Servqual Model provides strong theoretical support and practical guidance for evaluating the service quality of law firms. By applying this model, key factors affecting client satisfaction can be systematically identified and analyzed, providing a scientific basis for law firms to formulate improvement measures and enhance client satisfaction.

2.3.2 Theory of Client Satisfaction

Chen (2019) conducted an in-depth analysis of client satisfaction and client management at Yingke Law Firm (Foshan), focusing on various dimensions of legal service quality: tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, client care, and client loyalty, through a client satisfaction survey. The study focuses on the satisfaction with service quality at LY Law Firm in Heze, Shandong. It establishes client satisfaction survey indicators based on five dimensions of service quality assessment. The research categorizes clients into three groups: loyalists, swing clients, and defectors. Finally, targeted recommendations are proposed to enhance client satisfaction at the firm (Jiang, 2014). The client satisfaction evaluation system in the telecommunications industry is divided into two parts: standard satisfaction and business processes (Zhang, 2014). The business processes include five major indicators: product, service, pricing, channel, and sales. An expert consulting agency has established a quality control evaluation system for health check-up institutions in Shanghai, which includes three primary indicators,

ten secondary indicators, and multiple tertiary indicators (Guo & Li, 2019). They analyzed insurance company client satisfaction, constructing evaluation indicators and models validated by factor analysis to systematically assess client satisfaction at an insurance company in Changsha (Guo & Chen, 2015).

2.4 Conceptual Framework

This study is based on the client satisfaction theory and the Service Quality Evaluation Model theory to analyze the factors influencing client satisfaction with law firms.

To examine the factors affecting client satisfaction with law firms, this study constructs a model with brand image, service quality, and lawyer competence as independent variables. Client satisfaction serves as the dependent variable, as illustrated in Figure 2.1.

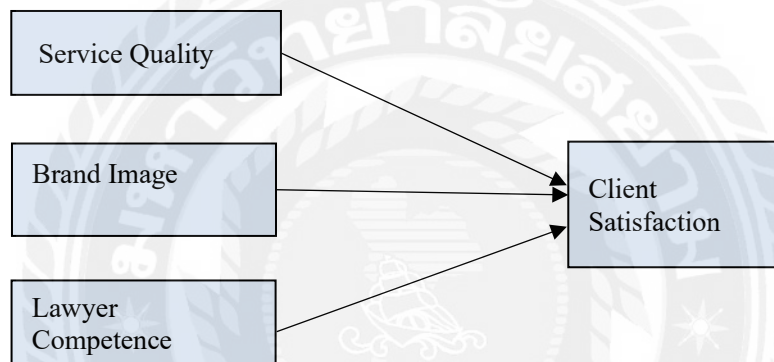


Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework

Chapter 3 Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

Chapter 2 outlines the theoretical foundation and basic concepts of client satisfaction in law firms, establishing a theoretical framework. This chapter employs a quantitative research method. Based on existing theoretical foundations and prior research, it confirms the content of the measurement scale and conducts the distribution and analysis of the questionnaire. Feedback from the data is used to adjust the questionnaire content, resulting in a formal questionnaire, which is then analyzed for reliability and validity using SPSS.

The scope of this research focuses on Beijing Zhongtong Law Firm as the primary research subject. The structural equation modeling analysis used in this study is based on the construction of the covariance matrix, a characteristic that makes the parameter estimation and goodness-of-fit chi-square test highly sensitive to sample size. Variations in sample size can significantly affect the precise estimation of model parameters and the evaluation of the model's fit to the data. It is generally considered that the ratio of sample size to the number of observed variables should be at least 10:1 to 15:1. Since there are 21 observed variables in this study, a total of 200 samples were distributed based on this ratio. The questionnaire content was adjusted based on data feedback, resulting in a formal questionnaire, and SPSS was used to analyze the reliability and validity of the questionnaire data.

3.2 Questionnaire Design

The independent variables in the model are service quality, brand image and lawyer competence and the dependent variable is client satisfaction. The questionnaire utilizes a five-point Likert scale. The first part of the questionnaire collects the basic characteristics of the survey sample, while the second part primarily collects data related to service quality, brand image, and lawyer competence. This analysis aims to identify the relationships and impacts these factors have on client satisfaction with law firms. By analyzing the collected data, insights can be gained regarding how each element contributes to the overall client satisfaction and the potential areas for improvement. There are several items for each variable, totaling 20 items.

In line with the research perspective, the structure of the questionnaire is divided into three major sections:

1. First Section: Acknowledgment and instructions. It begins with an explanation of the purpose of the questionnaire, followed by clarifications of terms used to ensure respondents fully understand the meaning of the items and provide the most accurate responses. It concludes with a statement ensuring confidentiality of the data and expressing gratitude for the respondents' participation.

2. Second Section: Filtering items and personal information about the respondents. First, the sample is screened to ensure the precision of the targeted respondents. Then,

basic information about the respondents, such as gender, age, reasons for choosing a law firm and client identity, is collected. This section serves as supplementary information for describing the research sample and helps ensure the authenticity and comprehensiveness of the study.

3. Third Section: Measurement of the three variables of the study—service quality, brand image, and lawyer competence—using a scale. The scale items were derived from previous mature scales in relevant research areas and were adjusted. A total of 20 items are included.

In the questionnaire's main body, the filtering items and personal information correspond to clear answers, so the options follow the principle of "no redundancy or omission" and are presented in multiple-choice format. The scale items relate to the respondents' attitudes, and since the answers are latent variables that are difficult to quantify, this study uses a five-point Likert scale to describe the responses. The respondents' subjective attitudes are quantified on a scale of 1 to 5, where the options represent "very dissatisfied," "dissatisfied," "neutral," "satisfied," and "very satisfied." As the values increase, they indicate a higher degree of agreement with the item, thus enabling the quantification of latent variables.

There are 21 total questions in the questionnaire, with items 1-21 being scale questions. Service quality comprises 7 questions, brand image and lawyer competence each comprise 6 questions while client satisfaction comprises 2 questions as shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Questionnaire Items

Variable	Measurement items	NO.
Service Quality	1. Were you satisfied with the Law Society's approach to maximizing benefits?	Q1
	2. Were you satisfied with the protection of personal information privacy by the firm's lawyers?	Q2
	3. Were you satisfied that the firm keeps the evidence, case files, etc. intact?	Q3
	4. Can the attorney differentiate his or her services according to your actual situation?	Q4
	5. Can an attorney perform services at a time that is convenient for you?	Q5
	6. Were you satisfied with the length of time it took for your attorney to get the legal materials to you when you needed help?	Q6
	7. How satisfied are you with the lawyer competence to put himself/herself in his/her shoes and solve problems?	Q7
Brand Image	1. How satisfied are you with the level of sophistication of the firm's legal services program for you?	Q8

	2. Were you satisfied that administrators and attorneys value decorum?	Q9
	3. Were you satisfied with the firm's online legal content improvement?	Q10
	4. Were you satisfied with the clean and tidy environment of the law firm?	Q11
	5. Were you satisfied that the law firm has modern office equipment?	Q12
	6. Were you satisfied that the facilities in the law firm are compatible with the services provided?	Q13
Lawyer Competence	1. Were you satisfied with the professional competence of the law firm's lawyers?	Q14
	2. Were you satisfied with the personalized attention the attorney can give?	Q15
	3. Were you satisfied with the lawyer competence to understand needs?	Q16
	4. Were you satisfied with the quality of the individual lawyers of the firm?	Q17
	5. Were you satisfied with the efficient handling of the lawyer's differentiated services?	Q18
	6. Were you satisfied with the level of education and experience of lawyers?	Q19
Client Satisfaction	1. Were you satisfied with the attorney's problem solving and winning arguments?	Q20
	2. Were you satisfied with the lawyer's overall service?	Q21

3.3 Hypotheses

To analyze the factors influencing client satisfaction, this study constructs a theoretical framework with the law firm's service quality, brand image, and lawyer competence as independent variables. Client satisfaction serves as the dependent variable.

As Beijing Zhongtong Law Firm's business grows, it sometimes neglects to provide excellent client follow-up and more effective, satisfying services. In a competitive environment, facing pressures and threats from various sources may lead to some client attrition. Therefore, analyzing its deficiencies in service marketing can help the law firm provide better services to clients in the future. The proposed hypotheses are shown in Figure 3.1.

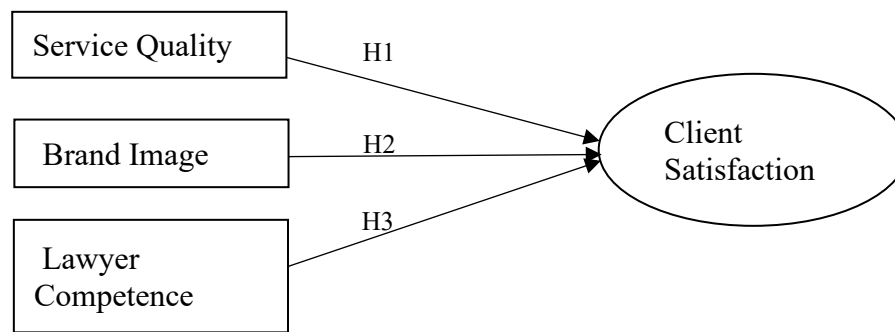


Figure 3.1 Hypotheses

H1: The service quality has a positive impact on client satisfaction with Beijing Zhongtong Law Firm.

H2: The brand image has a positive impact on client satisfaction with Beijing Zhongtong Law Firm.

H3: The lawyer competence has a positive impact on client satisfaction with Beijing Zhongtong Law Firm..

3.4 Population and Sampling

This study primarily explored the factors influencing client satisfaction with Beijing Zhongtong Law Firm. The population of the research was the clients of Beijing Zhongtong Law Firm. Using the sample formula, the collected data values correspond to the quartiles of a standard normal distribution, typically assuming a confidence level of 95%. The sample standard deviation (q) is generally estimated at 0.5, and the error margin (K), which is the maximum allowable difference between the sample mean and the population mean, is set at $K = 0.05$. Applying this formula, the required sample size was determined to be 300 respondents. The random sampling method utilized an online survey platform to distribute the questionnaires and randomly select samples from the overall population.

$$N = \frac{r^2 * q^2}{E}$$

3.5 Data Collection

Considering factors such as time and human resource costs, this study primarily utilized two forms of data collection: online distribution and paper questionnaire distribution. The online distribution primarily used email, QQ, and other social networking tools, while the paper questionnaires were distributed to clients visiting the Beijing law firm in person.

The main reasons for employing these two methods are:

1. Broader Sample Range: The online distribution method allows for a wider and more diverse sample selection, helping to reduce the limitations of a homogeneous sample. The distribution method ensures the validity of the sample survey, allowing for immediate clarification of any questions encountered by respondents, thereby reducing the likelihood of invalid samples.

2. Reduced Workload and Cost Savings: Using both methods not only minimizes the workload of the survey but also saves on costs associated with data collection.

To ensure the data collected was accurate and reliable, this study established several criteria for data collection: 1) Incomplete questionnaires were not accepted. 2) Questionnaires where all answers were the same were not accepted. 3) Questionnaires completed in less than one minute were not accepted. 4) Data from online respondents who indicated they had never heard of Beijing Zhongtong Law Firm was excluded to ensure the accuracy of the data sources.

Using the above two methods, a total of 200 questionnaires were distributed, with 100 sent online and 92 returned; 100 paper questionnaires were distributed, all of which were returned. In total, 192 questionnaires were collected. After reviewing the questionnaires and excluding invalid responses, 188 valid questionnaires remained, resulting in a validity rate of 94%. The entire survey period lasted 75 days.

3.6 Data Analysis

3.6.1 Reliability Analysis

Reliability refers to the extent to which the data collected by the survey questionnaire is accurate and reliable. In the preliminary research of this study's questionnaire, it was established that the reliability is primarily determined by Cronbach's α coefficient. A Cronbach's α coefficient above 0.8 for the overall scale indicates that the quality of the survey questionnaire is quite ideal. A coefficient between 0.7 and 0.8 indicates that the overall quality of the questionnaire is acceptable. For subscales, a Cronbach's α coefficient above 0.7 suggests that the quality of the measurement items for that specific dimension is ideal, while a coefficient between 0.6 and 0.7 suggests that the quality is acceptable. In this study, SPSS software was used to test the reliability of the scales of service quality, brand image, lawyer competence, and client satisfaction, respectively, and the results of the analysis are shown in Table 3.2.

As shown in Table 3.2, the Cronbach's α coefficients for the 21 valid measurement items of the overall scale in the survey questionnaire are all higher than the standard threshold of 0.8. This indicates that the overall reliability of the data collected by the survey questionnaire is quite high. The valid data for each variable collected by the survey questionnaire are also relatively reliable and stable, making them suitable for proceeding to the next stage of validity analysis.

Table 3.2 Reliability Test

Variable	Cronbach Alpha	N of Items
Service Quality	0.899	7
Brand Image	0.863	6
Lawyer Competence	0.875	6
Client Satisfaction	0.866	2

3.6.2 Validity Analysis

Validity refers to the evaluation of the validity of each variable in the questionnaire. A common method for testing questionnaire validity is factor analysis. The validity of the questionnaire is determined through factor analysis. The KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin) test and Bartlett's sphericity test need to be conducted before performing principal component factor analysis. Only when the KMO value is greater than 0.7 can factor analysis be performed. Survey data show that the overall KMO value is 0.907, with a significance level of 0.000, which is less than 0.05 and reaches a significant level, indicating that factor analysis can be conducted. This study employed Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). The KMO and Bartlett's sphericity tests were conducted on the pre-test data to validate the construct validity of the scale. The results, as shown in Table 3.3, indicate that the KMO values are greater than 0.8 and Bartlett's sphericity test is significant. This suggests that the structure validity of the scale is good, and the independence of each dimension is well established, indicating that the overall validity of the questionnaire is good.

Table 3.3 KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser -Meyer -Olkin Sampling Adequacy Measures		0.907
Bartlett's test of sphericity	Approx. CARTES	4196.266
	df	453
	organizations	0.000

3.6.3 Analysis of the Questionnaire Data

On the basis of the above data analysis, the relevant data of the questionnaire survey are analysed in detail in Chapter 4. Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis and multivariate regression analysis were used to analyse the data and verify the research hypotheses.



Chapter 4 Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter verified the conceptual model and the research hypotheses regarding client satisfaction constructed in Chapter 2. Based on the reliability and validity tests of the questionnaire in Chapter 3, a statistical analysis and hypothesis testing were conducted. First, SPSS software was used to perform descriptive statistical analysis on the data, including the statistical analysis of demographic characteristic including gender, age, reasons for choosing a law firm, and identity, as well as the data analysis of brand image, service quality, and lawyer competence .

4.2 Descriptive Statistics of Variables

Based on the collected questionnaire data, the personal information of the respondents was statistically analyzed, as detailed in Table 4.1. The table shows that, in this study's sample, 44.7% were male and 55.3% were female, indicating a balanced gender ratio. In terms of age, the majority of respondents (76.06%) were between 30 and 59 years old.

In term of reasons for choosing a law firm, 60.63% of clients chose the law firm because of its lawyers. Law firms form word of mouth among existing clients after referrals from clients or recommendations from acquaintances to clients in need, in which case the client's trust in the law firm's lawyers increases. The details are shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Demographic Characteristics of the Sample (N=188)

Basic Information		Number of people	Percentage (%)
Gender	men	84	44.7%
	women	104	55.3%
Age	18 years and below	4	2.13%
	19 to 29 years old	19	10.11%
	30 to 59 years old	143	76.06%
	60 years and older	22	11.7%
Reasons for choosing a law firm	brand image	34	18.09%
	quality of service	32	17.02%
	lawyers	114	60.63%

	geographic location	8	4.26%
Identity	plaintiff	42	22.34%
	defendant	50	22.6%
	consulting unit	86	45.74%
	others	10	5.32%

1. Analysis of Gender Differences in Clients

After conducting a descriptive statistical analysis of the respondents' demographic information, it was found that the gender ratio was relatively balanced, indicating a reasonable gender distribution in the questionnaire. The majority of valid questionnaires were from females, accounting for over 55.3%, suggesting that female clients are more likely to seek solutions for issues requiring mediation, as shown in Figure 4.1.

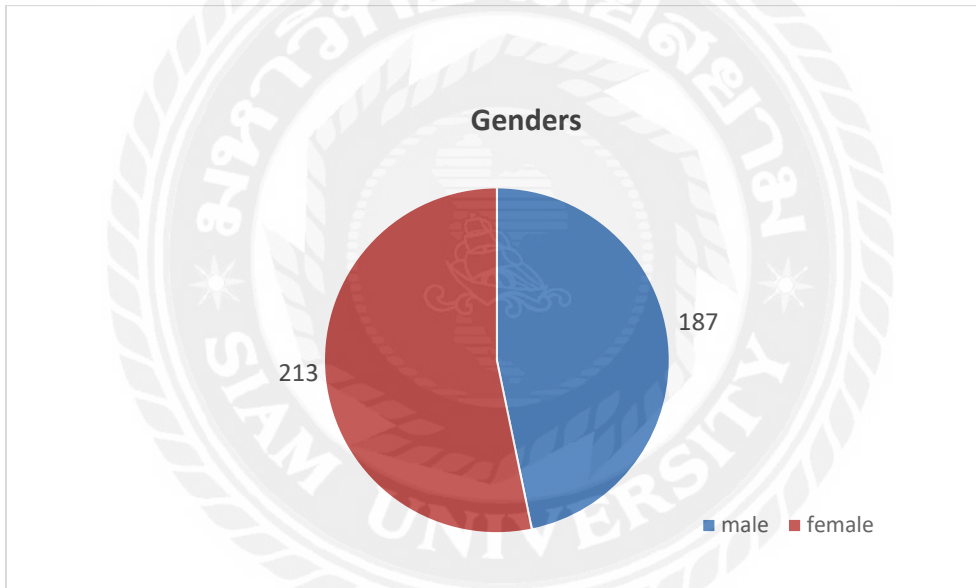


Figure 4.1 Descriptive Statistics of Gender

2. Analysis of Clients with Different Ages

From the perspective of age groups, almost all age ranges are represented; however, the majority (76.06%) are between 30 and 59 years old, making them the primary clients using the law firm's platform. This is illustrated in Figure 4.2.

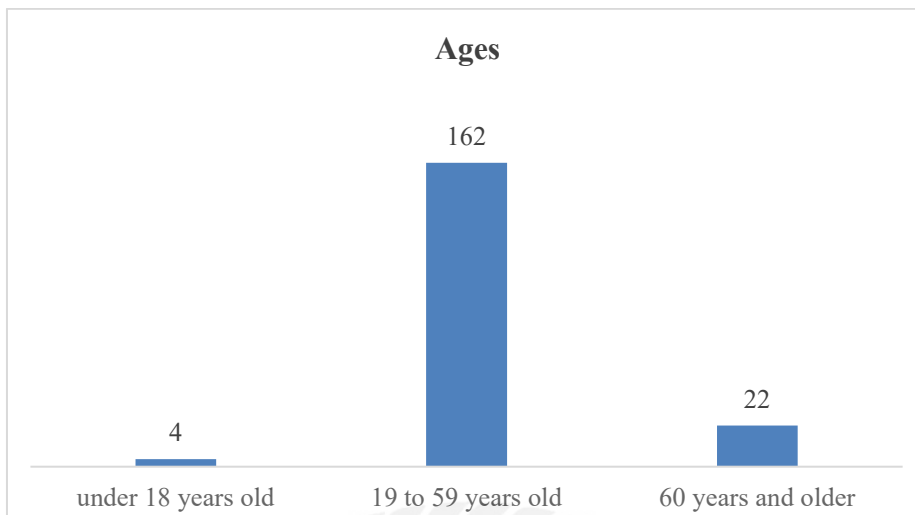


Figure 4.2 Descriptive Statistics of Age

3. Reasons for Choosing a Law Firm

60.63% of clients chose the law firm because of its lawyers. Legal services are infrequent, niche, and unique products, which means only clients with genuine needs are likely to consider them. If lawyers build a good reputation among existing clients and are referred by them or recommended by acquaintances to those in need, it naturally fosters a strong level of trust among clients toward the lawyers at the firm.

Reasons for choosing a Law Firm

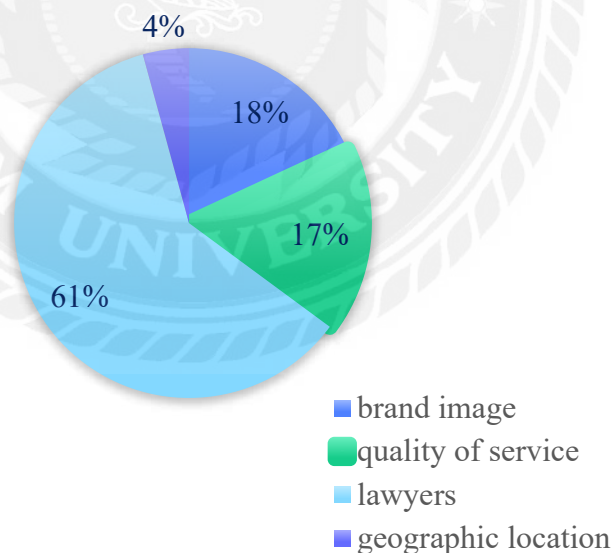


Figure 4.3 Descriptive Statistics of Reasons for Choosing a Law Firm

4. Analysis of Respondent Identities

The survey of respondents' identities revealed a balanced distribution between plaintiffs and defendants. Additionally, due to the relative stability of consulting units and the strong foundation built through long-term cooperation, there were relatively more respondents from these units. This also helps ensure the reliability and validity of the satisfaction data.

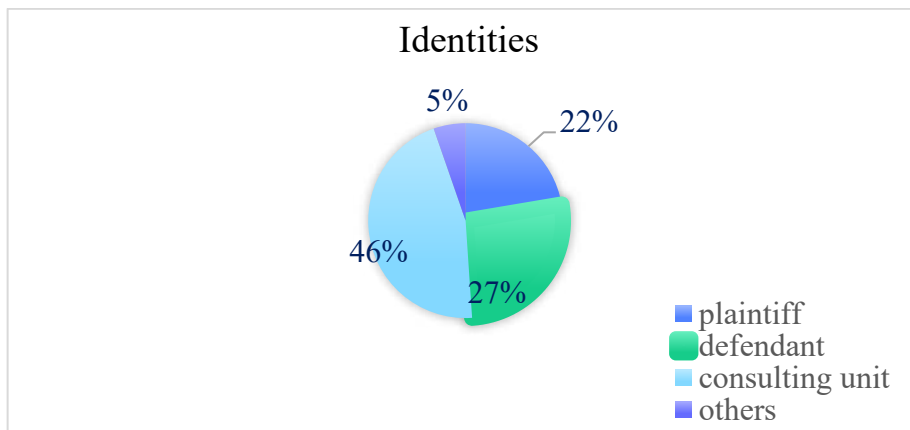


Figure 4.4 Descriptive Statistics of Respondent Identities

4.3 Research Results

4.3.1 Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis was conducted to determine linear relationships using the Pearson correlation coefficient. Positive values indicate a positive correlation, while negative values indicate a negative correlation. The range is from -1 to 1, with larger absolute values indicating stronger correlations; a value greater than 0.4 is considered a relatively strong positive correlation, while a value exceeding 0.6 indicates a strong positive correlation. The specific analysis results are shown in Table 4.2. The analysis results indicate that the correlation coefficients for client satisfaction with the law firm's service quality, brand image, and lawyer competence are all significantly positive.

Table 4.2 Correlation Analysis

Variable	Quality Service	Brand Image	Lawyer Competence	Client Satisfaction
Quality Service	1			
Brand Image	0.591**	1		
Lawyer Competence	0.551**	0.665**	1	
Client Satisfaction	0.572**	0.692**	0.675**	1

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

As shown in the table, the Pearson correlation coefficients between the service quality of the law firm, the brand image of the law firm, the lawyer competence of the law firm, and client satisfaction are all greater than 0.5 and less than 0.9, with $p < 0.05$. This indicates that there is a correlation between the variables, and it is positive.

Therefore, based on the data analysis results, when researching the factors influencing client satisfaction with law firms, it can be concluded that the service quality of the law firm has a significant positive impact on client satisfaction, supporting Hypothesis H1. The brand image has a significant positive impact on client satisfaction,

supporting Hypothesis H2. The lawyer competence has a significant positive impact on client satisfaction, supporting Hypothesis H3.

4.3.2 Multivariate Regression Analysis

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the relationships among the dependent variables of service quality, lawyer competence, and brand image. The regression equation was significant, with $F = 142.172$ and $p < 0.001$. The Durbin-Watson statistic was 1.944, which falls between 1.8 and 2.2, indicating that the data are independent and meet the requirements for linear regression.

In the covariance diagnostics, the VIF values for service quality, brand image, lawyer competence and client satisfaction were 1.118, 1.091, 1.195, and 1.073, respectively. All VIF values are close to 1, meeting the requirements and indicating that there is no covariance in the data.

Service quality ($\beta = 0.135$, $p < 0.05$), lawyer competence ($\beta = 0.217$, $p < 0.05$), service quality ($\beta = 0.101$, $p < 0.05$), and brand image ($\beta = 0.297$, $p < 0.05$) all significantly and positively influence client satisfaction. These variables together explain 57.5% of the variance in client satisfaction, meeting the requirements, as shown in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 Multiple Regression Analysis

Item	Unstd. B	Std. Beta	t	Sig.	VIF	F	Durbin-Watson
Constant	3.209	-	7.506	0.000		142.172	1.944
Service Quality	0.135*	0.175	4.176	0.000	1.118		
Brand Image	0.217*	0.262	5.327	0.000	1.091		
Lawyer Competence	0.101*	0.130	2.753	0.006	1.195		
R-squared	0.579						
Adjusted R-square	0.575						

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Based on the multiple regression analysis, the influence of the variables are as follows:

Client Satisfaction = 3.209 + 0.135 (Service Quality) + 0.217 (Brand Image) + 0.101 (Lawyer Competence)

Therefore, according to the data analysis results, in the study of factors affecting client satisfaction, service quality has a significant positive impact on client satisfaction, supporting Hypothesis H1. Lawyer competence also has a significant positive impact on client satisfaction, supporting Hypothesis H3. Additionally, brand image has a significant positive impact on client satisfaction, supporting Hypothesis H2.

Chapter 5 Conclusion and Recommendation

5.1 Conclusion

This study aimed to study the factors influencing client satisfaction with law firms and their mechanisms of action. The essence of this research were based on the client perspective, integrating service quality and brand image, and using this as the theoretical foundation for the study. The goal was to explore the factors that affect client satisfaction with law firms, ultimately promoting the development of law firms in a better direction and providing reference for businesses to enhance service levels and make informed decisions.

This chapter concludes the results of the empirical analysis in Chapter 4 and propose business countermeasures in favour of law firms from three aspects: service quality, brand image and lawyer competence aiming at guiding law firms in improving client satisfaction with the help of the survey result.

5.1.1 Factors Influencing Client Satisfaction with Law Firms.

From the correlation and regression analysis, the Pearson correlation coefficients for service quality, brand image, and lawyer competence were obtained. The Pearson correlation coefficients values are greater than 0.5 and less than 0.9, with $p < 0.01$, indicating a correlation between the variables. The regression analysis model was constructed in the regression analysis with a coefficient of service quality of 0.135, a coefficient of brand image of 0.217 and a coefficient of lawyer competence of 0.101. It shows that the variables are positively related to client satisfaction.

The research results demonstrate that service quality, brand image, and lawyer competence influence client satisfaction, with service quality, brand image, and lawyer competence having a positive impact on client satisfaction.

5.1.2 Service Quality, Brand Image, and Lawyer Competence Positively Influence Client Satisfaction with Law Firms.

1. The service quality of law firms has a positive impact on client satisfaction.

As a technical knowledge service industry with a strong social attribute, lawyers trade legal knowledge as a product through their own expression. It is crucial for every client, who dreams of winning their case, to feel satisfied during their initial contact with the law firm. This significantly tests a lawyer's overall competency in problem-solving. Beyond professional requirements, lawyers should also recognize clients' "business goals" and "value needs," demonstrating a sense of understanding and care by providing personalized services.

2. The brand image of law firms has a positive impact on client satisfaction.

CIS, or Corporate Identity System, involves a systematic transformation of a company's self-perception, service direction, work system, and supervisory framework, resulting in a distinctive corporate image that is easily communicable. This

encompasses three major identification systems: conceptual recognition, behavioral recognition, and visual recognition.

Law firms should first design aesthetically pleasing names and logos that emphasize the concept of "people-oriented." Additionally, uniform branding should be applied to internal decorations, tote bags, and lawyer business cards. Furthermore, various legal documents should be rewritten using a standardized text format to achieve a balance of aesthetics and practicality. Finally, law firms should establish websites, public accounts, and video channels to enhance their visibility and attract more potential clients.

3. The competence of lawyers in law firms has a positive impact on client satisfaction.

With the advancement of society and the increasing legal awareness among the public, there are rising demands for lawyers' professional qualifications. The specialization of lawyers has become more refined, resulting in the emergence of roles such as negotiation lawyers, litigation lawyers, and drafting lawyers, among others. This requires lawyers to continuously improve their professional skills and acquire new knowledge, which is essential for becoming a practicing lawyer. The competitiveness of a lawyer's profession stems from their ability to learn.

Ultimately, this research aims to enhance client satisfaction with law firms, stabilize the client market, strengthen the competitive advantage of law firms, and promote their long-term, stable, and healthy development. Additionally, it is hoped that this study will serve as a reference for other law firms seeking to improve client service satisfaction.

5.2 Recommendation

5.2.1 Continuously improving the service quality of law firms to enhance client satisfaction.

Lawyers provide legal services to corporate clients, generally divided into three levels: first, to meet the client's most urgent legal service needs; second, to discover and meet their potential legal needs through communication and interaction with clients; and third, to create legal needs for clients, generate value, and thus form a strategic partnership that fosters a mutually beneficial relationship.

A junior lawyer may be driven by the client's "requests," responding to client demands. They can generally meet the requirements, but their thinking tends to become rigid, making it difficult to break through and solve the client's core issues. This can lead clients to perceive lawyers as only capable of handling litigation or reviewing contract texts. Clients' memories and perceptions can cause their dependence on the law firm to become increasingly fragile. In this situation, client attrition is not uncommon.

A competent lawyer can maintain aligned thinking with the client; they possess empathy and handle cases with the client's "expectations" in mind, potentially achieving good results. However, when clients cannot accurately express their needs or are unclear about their true requirements, lawyers may only be able to meet superficial needs and

fail to resolve deeper conflicts. Such lawyers find it difficult to earn clients' long-term favor and trust.

An excellent lawyer can objectively analyze the facts presented by the client from multiple dimensions, uncovering "needs" and guiding clients along the way. Their greatest value is in meeting clients' intrinsic expectations and even exceeding them. Becoming a lawyer who provides this kind of value is the essence of uncovering "client needs."

To clarify the different needs of various clients, it is essential to consider their actual business environments and development prospects, helping them recognize the significance and value of legal services. Lawyers can independently tailor legal services with unique characteristics for these businesses, proactively engaging clients and providing high-value products to enhance clients' sense of recognition and dependence.

Lawyers should utilize their professional knowledge to accurately assess clients' pain points and challenges; analyze and argue the feasibility of legal solutions from the clients' perspective; and control clients' goals, designing personalized solutions as a method for maintaining client relationships.

5.2.2 Continuously enhancing the brand image of law firms to improve client satisfaction.

Public attention and attraction are of utmost importance. In the face of increasingly fierce market competition, only by building a strong brand and leveraging brand effects can one truly gain recognition from the general public. A good brand effect facilitates smoother connections between clients, the market, and law firms. A strong brand represents the memory clients have of the firm and is an external manifestation of the brand's culture. A good brand also signifies clients' integrated understanding of the law firm, suggesting that the firm possesses a broad market prospect.

To create a unique brand for Beijing Zhongtong Law Firm, long-term accumulation and relentless pursuit are essential. A law firm must have a long-term vision and strive to enhance its influence within the legal services industry. To build SL Law Firm into a renowned brand within the legal profession, the following areas need to be addressed:

Beijing Zhongtong Law Firm should take the visual identity system (VI) as a guide. First, it should design an aesthetically pleasing name and logo from various angles, including text shape, color, and patterns, emphasizing the goal of "people-oriented" service. Next, all visible elements, such as internal decorations, office stationery, file bags, tote bags, and business cards, should have a unified branding. Additionally, all types of legal documents should be rewritten using a standardized text template to achieve a win-win situation in terms of aesthetics and practicality. Finally, the law firm should produce promotional materials, compile journals, establish a website, and create public accounts and video channels to enhance its visibility and tap into more potential clients.

5.2.3 Continuously enhancing lawyer competence in law firms to improve client satisfaction.

Law firms should focus on improving the overall quality of their lawyers by deepening categorized training. For entry-level lawyers (assistants), training can help them develop good work attitudes and habits, strengthen their sense of responsibility and teamwork, and accurately understand and efficiently execute tasks assigned by senior lawyers and partners, thus effectively training them to become excellent lawyer assistants or junior lawyers.

For independent lawyers, training should help cultivate, consolidate, or strengthen the necessary thought processes and behavioral habits, expand their knowledge base, and enrich their business skills so that they can independently or lead project teams in handling non-major or complex projects or cases with stable performance.

For senior lawyers, training should enhance their communication and negotiation skills, enabling them to independently handle significant and complex projects or cases, possess strong team management and development abilities, and maintain good relationships with existing clients while having a preliminary understanding of the legal service market.

For law firm directors and partners, training should reinforce their management responsibilities and awareness, improve their management capabilities, and promote standardized management and steady business growth within the firm.

Law firms should strengthen their business connections with the Ministry of Justice, the national and local bar associations, and relevant professional fields, actively participate in training activities organized by these entities, and arrange for lawyers to engage in relevant business training. Organizing, encouraging, and supporting on-the-job training for lawyers is essential, along with establishing an annual special fund for lawyer training and continuing education as part of the firm's educational expenses.

According to the needs of business development, each practicing lawyer must choose to participate in business lectures and professional training organized by various levels of judicial administrative bodies and bar associations, with a minimum of 40 hours of lecture attendance per year. Based on the specialization of business departments and the division of labor among lawyers, each year, practicing lawyers should attend various lectures or training sessions related to the law firm's business at national or local levels.

Depending on the lawyer's professional field, years of experience, performance, and work needs, each year, practicing lawyers should be selected to participate in training organized by the Ministry of Justice and the All-China Lawyers Association, among others. Practicing lawyers with a bachelor's degree in law or higher should be encouraged to pursue further advanced studies. The law firm will provide time and financial support for those participating in continuing education, and those achieving excellent results in continuing education will be recognized and rewarded according to relevant regulations.

By implementing the above recommendations, law firms can comprehensively improve and, in turn, enhance client satisfaction. This will help them stand out in fierce market competition and achieve long-term stable development.



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Appendix

Dear Sir/Madam:

Hello! I am a postgraduate student at Siam University, Thailand, and I am conducting a research on the factors influencing client satisfaction at law firms, using Beijing Zhongtong Law Firm as a case study. I need relevant research data. We hope that you will fill in the following questionnaire according to your specific situation. This questionnaire is divided into two parts. This survey is only for academic research, and will not bring you any negative impact, please feel free to answer. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your support! Thank you for your participation in this questionnaire. This survey will be conducted anonymously and your information will be kept confidential. Thank you again for your co-operation!

Questionnaire Answer Tips: Please answer all questions and ensure that the answers are true and reliable, please try not to choose a compromise answer, to achieve an accurate estimate; if there is no catering industry in Henan Province catering brands, please do not fill in to ensure that we collect the validity of the data. Thank you again for your support.

PART I :

1. Your gender:
 Male Female
2. Your age:
 Under 18
 19-29
 30-59
 60 and above
3. Your educational background:
 Junior high school or below
 High school/Vocational school
 Associate degree
 Bachelor's degree
 Master's degree or above
4. Your reasons for choosing the law firm:
 Brand image
 Service quality
 Lawyers at the firm
 Geographic location
5. Your role:
 Plaintiff
 Defendant
 Consultant unit

Other

Part II:

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements. Choose the most appropriate option and place a "√" on the corresponding number. The questionnaire uses a Likert scale, with scores ranging from 1 to 5. 1 indicates strongly disagree (or strongly disagree), 2 indicates somewhat disagree (or somewhat disagree), 3 indicates neutral, 4 indicates somewhat agree (or somewhat agree), and 5 indicates strongly agree (or strongly agree).

Measurement items	Strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree with	agree strongly
Service Quality					
1. Were you satisfied with the Law Society's approach to maximizing benefits?					
2. Were you satisfied with the protection of personal information privacy by the firm's lawyers?					
3. Were you satisfied that the firm keeps the evidence, case files, etc. intact?					
4. Can the attorney differentiate his or her services according to your actual situation?					
5. Can an attorney perform services at a time that is convenient for you?					
6. Were you satisfied with the length of time it took for your attorney to get the legal materials to you when you needed help?					
7. How satisfied are you with the lawyer's ability to put himself/herself in his/her shoes and solve problems?					
Brand Image					
1. How satisfied are you with the level of sophistication of the firm's legal services program for you?					

2. Were you satisfied that administrators and attorneys value decorum?					
3. Were you satisfied with the firm's online legal content improvement?					
4. Were you satisfied with the clean and tidy environment of the law firm?					
5. Were you satisfied that the law firm has modern office equipment?					
6. Were you satisfied that the facilities in the law firm are compatible with the services provided?					
Lawyer Capabilities					
1. Were you satisfied with the professional competence of the law firm's lawyers?					
2. Were you satisfied with the personalized attention the attorney can give?					
3. Were you satisfied with the lawyer's ability to understand needs?					
4. Were you satisfied with the quality of the individual lawyers of the firm?					
5. Were you satisfied with the efficient handling of the lawyer's differentiated services?					
6. Were you satisfied with the level of education and experience of lawyers?					
Client Satisfaction					
1. Were you satisfied with the attorney's problem solving and winning arguments?					
2. Were you satisfied with the lawyer's overall service?					

