Service Quality between Private and Public Universities In The Mekong Delta, Vietnam.

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ABSTRACT:- Based on the verified sample of 232 students who are studying a private university and a public university. The exploratory factor analysis is supported to extract seven factor, e.g. tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, affordability, empathy, affordability, and employability, which all of them are found their significantly positive impacts on student satisfaction. The employable factor is the highest evaluation, due to the current consideration of students focusing much on their future occupation. A comparable test by ANOVA is conducted and confirmed that the private university and public university has a better approach in their quality service, in which the private university is evaluated higher. These findings are quite important for educational policy makers and curriculum developers who are working in university toward the appropriate curriculum development in future

Keywords:- service quality, public university, private university

I. INTRODUCTION

Service quality has become a predominant part of all advanced organizations' strategic plans. It is not only concerned in business units, but also adopted in education organizations. Once service quality has a good approach during business, a unit can meet customer satisfaction. May be said that service quality becomes a central point of scholars to investigate, because the study attempts to characterize it. Many definitions of service quality which it refers to conformity to specializations for customers (Berry, Parasuraman, & Zeithaml, 1988), in which the quality in education plays an important role for a consequence of a long term development. Once the quality in education takes a wrong way it can create an unpredictable disaster for a generation.

The service quality, however, is differently evaluated by differences in characteristics of culture, demographic information, personal factors, and actual economic situation of a country. Poor perceived quality can ultimately impact on funding and viability in the education organization. Because of economic development and popularized integration, students in an emerging country, e.g. Vietnam, seemly have more choices toward an appropriate university. Once student dissatisfaction is occurred, the consequence can result in reduced applications in subsequent years as the reputation for poor quality becomes known, even though existing students are likely to be constrained to remain. According to Holdford & Patkar (2003), the service quality derived by assessment of services offered to the students who are following their educational journey.

This paper is going to investigate what students think of service quality as well as refers their perception to the quality in education of a private university and a public university located in the Mekong Delta (MD), Vietnam. In addition, an examination of different evaluation of students on that service quality between those two styles of university is also taken into account.

II. HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE MEKONG DELTA

Positive changes in Vietnam's educational system are prominently recorded currently. This achievement is based on changes in institutional and policies, e.g. a higher education reform addenda (Resolution 14/2005/Nq-CP). Vietnam's integration is expanded deeply and broadly to make many opportunities for the public and private universities take cooperation with international universities. However, many challenges that the public university often face dynamic and flexible strategies of private universities, more damaged when a foreign university appears as competitors.

The MD where is main agricultural production area accounting for 80% with a natural area of about 4 million hectares and over 19 million people. Besides rice production, the Mekong Delta is also rich in fruit and seafood for export. This is a rich land with beautiful scenery including colorful fruit trees all year round. Can Tho City is the central city in the MD, in which there are public and private universities doing business. The

public university is a leading organization initially, e.g. Can Tho University, where is an important state higher education institution in the Mekong Delta, is the cultural, scientific and technical center.

Although until now there is not any foreign university, the public university, such as Can Tho University, has to compete against private universities, e.g. Tay Do University and Nam Can Tho University. This is one of reasons that Can Tho University has a rapid expansion in capacity at the expense of quality and new voices, which contribute in moving from a rural economy with an emerging adaptive industrial base to one in which a higher reliance of internationalized trade and innovation will be the driver of continuing development.

III.   RELATED WOKS

Currently, there is a noticeable trend which reveals the increasing competition among the universities and higher education institutes to attract students from across the Mekong River Delta, Vietnam. Service quality as an important indicator that universities concern to measure how relationship between satisfaction and service quality. Service quality is a term of the literature in operations management and marketing, but is just starting to gain attention in higher education. Some arguments think of the educational literature that has been mounting pressure from the customers of higher education, which include stakeholders, such as parents, students, alumni, employers and legislators. Therefore, it is imperative that universities actively monitor the quality of their services and keep its compliance to continuous improvements in an effort to respond to the needs of the institutional constituencies.

Students and service quality

Some scholars have arguments on students as non-customers, but others think that universities are to provide students what they expect, e.g. good job in future. However, currently, private and public universities are trying to early to attract prospects who are pupil in high schools

Sahu (2007) had a study on service quality in an academic library and found importance of staff, who are working at library. The author also notes that quality information service is a determinant to define and satisfy students in universities. Leveson (2004) identified a complex relationship between student and teacher in higher education, which students are just one of many stakeholders and have different needs and expectations of the education system. Students' perception on the higher education experience is more and more improve, due to various information of education programs published in internet.

Quality elements in the delivery of a service in the institution of higher learning can be categorized as follows (Joseph & Joseph, 1997): courses offered; cost/scholarships; university environment; reputation; facilities; academic staff; campus activities; orientation/registration; family/friends; sport teams; and preparation for employment.

Perception of the public also is an important judgment factor in deciding the quality of an institution (Shanahan & Gerber, 2004). The researcher pointed out that quality as public image can be further divided into 3 components, quality is as much a perception as it is reality; second, the organization should exude quality in its public face; and third, the nature of the market as well as competition will affect the extent of how well such quality exudes. In terms of image, the perception of good quality should later be converted to reality to encourage the customer loyalty. The faculty of student administration must be seen as quality through the eyes of public for example in term of promotional materials and its physical surrounds.

One of famous findings that Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry (1985) built a service quality model of 10 key factors as follows: (i) *Reliability* – the service is carried out the way it is promised; (ii) *Responsiveness* – services are carried out promptly according to the needs of the customers; (iii) *Competence* – the staff of the service provider have the knowledge and skills required for delivering the service in a proper way; (iv) *Accessibility* – concerns, e.g. opening hours, physical locations; (v) *Courtesy* - The staffs are polite, friendly, respectful, etc.; (vi) *Communication* - keeping the customers informed in a language that they can understand and listening to them; (vii) *Credibility* - the service provider is trustworthy, believable and honest; (viii) *Security* – freedom from danger, risk or doubt; (ix) *Understanding the customer* - the service provider makes an effort to understand the needs and wants of the individual customers; (x) *Tangibles* - physical objects that are needed for carrying out the service such as facilities, equipment, etc.

Quality in higher education

Service quality in the field of higher education plays a essential importance to influence student satisfaction. However, its evaluation is based on various state holders who experience by higher education institutions. According to (Jancey & Burns, 2013), students ar the main stakeholers of any higher education organizations, their experiences involved in different services are depended on their student years.

To identify students' perception of quality in higher education, Hill, Lomas, & Macgregor (2003) approached a combination of literature and qualitative research through focus groups, these author found themes

of four dimensions of service quality, such as: (i) quality of the lecturer; (ii) student engagement with learning; (iii) social/emotional support systems; (iv) resources of library and IT. With an approach of qualitative phenomenographic research, Shanahan & Gerber (2004) conducted a resrearch face-to-face interview of 42 respondents, e.g. students, parents, adminisrative staff, academic staff, executive officers, domestic partners, offhore partners and careers adviser, these author categorise results into eigh conceptions: (i) quality as public image; (ii) quality as leadership; (iii) quality as value for money; (iv) quality as value-added service; (v) quality as resources; (vi) quality as work practicers; (vii) qualyti as intrinsic goodness; (viii) quality as satisfaction. This findings is interesting for researchers who want to go further to test through quantitative methods.

According to Lagrosen, Seyyed-Hashemi, & Leitner (2004), nine dimensions of quality should be concerned to evaluate quality in higher education: (1) Corporate collaboration; (2) Information and responsiveness; (3) Courses offered; (4) Campus facilities; (5) Teaching practices; (6) Internal evaluations; (7) Computer facilities; (8) Collaboration and comparisons; (9) Library resources.

SERVQUAL as service quality measurement tool

In order to investigate the question order issue with respect to service quality measurement in higher education, SERVQUAL model will be used with some essential modifications to suit the educational environment in Vietnam. Accordingly, Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry (1991) had a refinement and reassessment of SERVQUAL scale based on the original finding of Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry (1988), the main five factors are focused: (i) Tangibles is defined as physical facilities, equipment, and appearance of peronnel; (ii) Reliability as ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately; (iii) Responsiveness as williningness to help customers and provide prompt service; (iv) Assurance as knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence; (v) Empathy as caring, individualized attention the firm provides its customers.

As reviewed, the five factors just mentioned of Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry (1991) are employed in the current study. In addition, the affordable factor is also recruited, it is based on Lenton (2015), because, according to Leton, the expenditure adiministrative per student was found evidence of its significant impact on the student satisfaction. With arguments of (James & Yun, 2018) of what they explore student satisfaction and future employement intention. Motivations of students to enter higher education come from meaningful employment from their degree appears to be inherently involved in society. Their satisfaction can placed on teaching and learning of universities' delivery.

In sum, the model proposed in figure 1 is based on previous studies, in which the first five factors are cited from Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry (1991) and other two are from Lenton (2015) as affordability and james & Yun (2018) as employability

Satisfaction.

Customer satisfaction are variously defined, it presents an involvement around concepts such as experience or quality of service, perceived value, expectation, and consequent evaluation of service (Ali & Amin, 2014). Student satisfaction can come from various factors, in which institutional factors (e.g. quality of instruction, quality and promptness of the instructor's feedback, teaching style of the instructor, the research) and personal factors are included. As a result, to meet students' satisfaction, the higher education service provider have to consider both instituonal and personal factors (Chahal & Devi, 2013). As a result, the measure of student satisfaction as a dependent variable is developed, which seven point scale is employed, with 1 being not satisfied at all, and 7 being extremly satisfied.

The proposed model of the current study is summarized in figure 1 with six hypotheses as follows
Hypotheses for testing are as follows:

HI: An increase in tangibles causes a rise in student satisfaction
H2: An increase in reliability causes a rise in student satisfaction
H3: An increase in responsiveness causes a rise in student satisfaction
H4: An increase in assurance causes a rise in student satisfaction
H5: An increase in empathy causes a rise in student satisfaction
H6: An increase in affordability causes a rise in student satisfaction
H7: An increase in employable causes a rise in student satisfaction

Figure 1: Conceptual model proposed
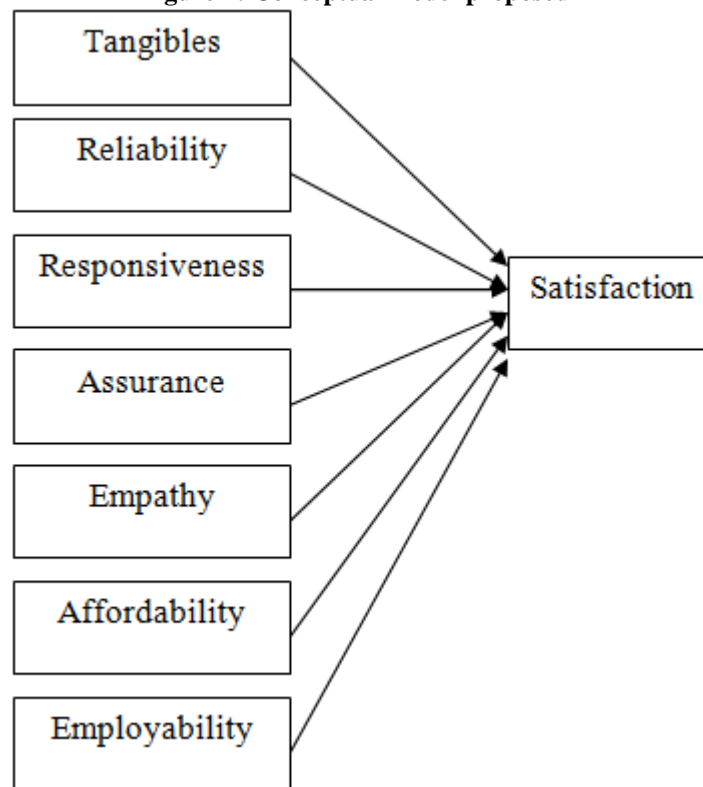
IV. DATA COLLECTION

The questionnaire of quantitative is originally developed through the qualitative method conducted on 10 respondents, who are professors with more than five years of experience, teaching in private university (5 professors) and public universities (5 professors).

Initially, 350 questionnaires sent to students of third year onwards at private universities (50%) and public universities (50%) located in the Mekong Delta, which the stratified random sampling to represent the population in the present study is taken into account, The final sample verified is 232 questionnaires, which the sample of selection is based on a distribution on two types of universities, which two big universities in Can Tho City are taken into account, in which one is Can Tho University, another is the private university, asked to be hidden its name.

Perception of those students interviewed is vital to the research since it will influence their choice of institution of higher education to pursue after their school term. The sample in this research will represent all races and genders. Information included in the questionnaire consists of the respondent's profile, e.g. gender, race, ethnicity, religion, interested course of study, and parents' income and occupation. Additionally, perceptions asked are attributes related to service quality and satisfaction, its measure is based on seven point scale, 1 being strong disagree and 7 being strongly agree. The questionnaires were administered by way of face-to-face interviews, which a team of fifteen interviewers being students were recruited and trained to conduct the interviews.

V. EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

Although the initial sample expected is 300 questionnaires to be collected back after interviewing, the verified sample of 290 is 232 sufficient, because some respondents did not answer fully. The survey was directly conducted by team students who are studying in university and they were trainned previously.

Students who are concerned in the study are third years and up joining the university. Based on descriptive analysis, the students with fourth year in unversity account for 94.8%, the rest is third year of 3.4% and fifth year of 1.7%. Of which the specialization of economics occupies 74%, next as agriculture (55), informatics (4%), education 3%, and others (14%). Reasons of the high share of economic students in the sample are that the economic specialization account for much more students in both private and publich universities in the Mekong Delta, in which students interviewed belong to private unversity and public university is 47% and 53%, respectively. As shown in table 2, there are much difference in gender between private and public university. As a result, the repondents in the study is strongly representative for the study, this

study will be a significant contribution to universities know how to improve students' satisfaction based on investigating service quality, this is detailedly carried out in the coming section.

Table 1: Cross tabulation between gender and university

			University		Total
			Private University	Public University	
Gender	Female	Count	60	75	135
		% within Gender	44.4%	55.6%	100.0%
		% within University	55.0%	61.0%	58.2%
		% of Total	25.9%	32.3%	58.2%
	Male	Count	49	48	97
		% within Gender	50.5%	49.5%	100.0%
		% within University	45.0%	39.0%	41.8%
		% of Total	21.1%	20.7%	41.8%
Total		Count	133	109	123
		% within Gender	47.0%	47.0%	53.0%
		% within University	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	47.0%	47.0%	53.0%

Source: Own survey

According to the questionnaire, six questions as below are employed to find out students' evaluation and perception on the university. Evaluation are measured in scale from 0 being nothing to 10 being the best.
- The ability of the university to provide good facilities, equipment, class rooms, recreations, library, toilets to its students (q1)
- The ability of the university to produce quality human resources for society (q2)
- The willingness of lecturers and staff to help students to provide guidance and solve problems (q3)
- The ability of university to provide quality education (q4)
- The ability of university to cooperate external organization: enterprise associations (q5)
- The ability of university to support external organization by consulting and doing research (q6)

As resulted in table 2, five questions (q1, q2, q3, q4, q5) are not found in significant difference in students' evaluation, except to q5. This means that the ability of university to support external organization by consulting and doing research are confirmed in a significant difference at 1% significant level between the private university and the public university, in which the public university is highly evaluated. This is consistent with the practice, the public university in the study as Can Tho university is long length of service almost 25 years, so has a strong network of consulting to provinces in the Mekong Delta, while the private university is just 10 years.

Table 2: Evaluation of student on university's ability

University			Q2.1	Q2.2	Q2.3	Q2.4	Q2.5	Q2.6
	Private University	Mean	7.66	7.58	7.46	7.84	7.79	6.86
		N	109	109	109	109	109	108
		Std. Deviation	1.71	1.58	1.64	1.67	1.43	1.57
	Public University	Mean	7.37	7.48	7.15	7.63	7.59	7.41
		N	123	123	123	123	123	121
		Std. Deviation	1.82	1.69	2.02	1.77	1.95	1.70
	Total	Mean	7.51	7.53	7.30	7.73	7.68	7.15
		N	232	232	232	232	232	229
		Std. Deviation	1.77	1.64	1.85	1.72	1.73	1.66

Source: Own survey

Test Statistics[a]						
	Q2.1	Q2.2	Q2.3	Q2.4	Q2.5	Q2.6
Mann-Whitney U	6233.000	6581.500	6219.500	6298.000	6678.000	5010.500
Wilcoxon W	13859.000	14207.500	13845.500	13924.000	14304.000	10896.500
Z	-.940	-.245	-.964	-.813	-.051	-3.105
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.347	.807	.335	.416	.959	.002
a. Grouping Variable: University (Private University and Public University)						

Relationship between service quality and satisfaction

Based on (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010), the method of explorator factor analysis is employed, and seven factors are exptracted from the method. Continuously, testing Cronbach's Alpha is taken into account. According to (Hair et al., 2010), the value of Cronbach's Alpha ranges between 0 and 1. The closer Cronbach's alpha coefficient is to 1.0 the greater the internal consistency of the items in the scale. More detailedly, there are the following rules of thumb: >0.9: Excellent; >0.8: Good; >0.7: Accepted; >0.6: Questionable; >5: Poor; and <5: Unacceptable. Accordingly, our data suggest that 37 items (variables) have relatively high internal consistency due to reliability coefficient larger than 0.70. As resulted in table 3, Cronbach's Alpha of all seven factors are reliable and sufficient

Table 3: Result of testing Cronbach's Alpha

| Stt	Factors extracted	Cronbach's Alpha
1.	F1: Tangibility (4 items)	0.740
2.	F2: Reliability (4 items)	0.860
3.	F3: Responsiveness (5 items)	0.850
4.	F4: Assurance (10 items)	0.810
5.	F5: Empathy (5 items)	0.880
6.	F6: Affordability (4 items)	0.810
7.	F7: Employability (5 items)	0.900

Testing hypotheses

The method of exploratory factor analysis is quite supported to extract seven factors as mentioned in table 3. Continuously, the regression model is employed to test seven hypotheses. The result of regession is derived (not insert here to keep space) that R-Square is high of 0.701, this means that 70.1% changes in student satisfaction is explained by independent variables, e.g. tangibility, reliability, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, affordability, and employability. In addition, the regression model is goodness of fit between the dependent variable and independent variables, which is informed by 1% of ANOVA and figure 2.

Table 4: Result estimated of regression

Model	Model[a]			Decision	
	Coefficient	Sig.	Standardized Coeff.	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	.559	.030			
Tangibility of Services	.179	.018	0.157	0.391.	2.559
Reliability of Services	.160	.027	0.159	0.333	3.005
Assurance of Services	.026	.049	0.025	0.266	3.754
Affordability of Services	.006	.048	0.006	0.538	1.859
Empathy of services	.148	.042	0.158	0.258	3.869
Responsiveness of Services	.160	.031	0.156	0.249	4.018
Employability after Completion	.204	.003	0.230	0.282	3.552
R-Square	R-Square = .701				

Note: (a) Dependent Variable: Satisfaction

Figure 2: Normal P-P plot of Regression standardized residual
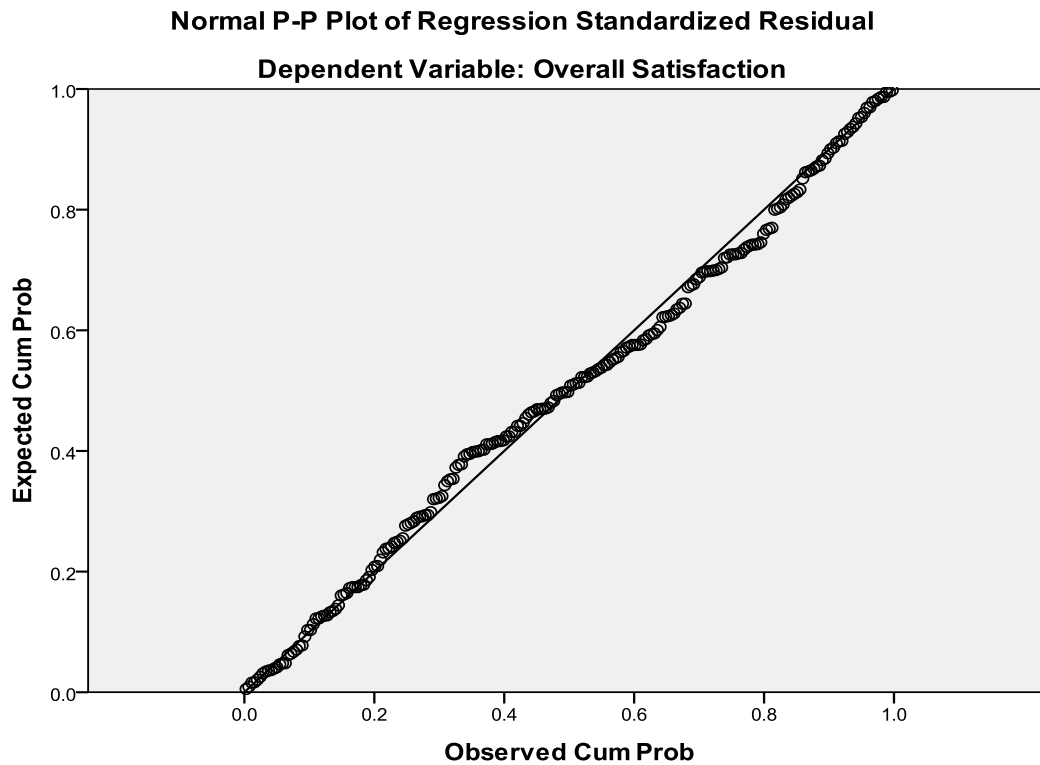
As resulted in table 4, the coefficients of seven factors are significant and positive, this means seven hypotheses are supported (table 5). Once one of seven factors, or some of them, or all of them increase those cause in a rise in student satisfaction. Based on standardized coefficient values in table 4. The ranking impact of seven factors on satisfaction is employability (0.230), reliability (0.159, empathy (0.158), tangibility (0.157), responsiveness (0.156), assurance (0.025), and affordability (0.006).

The result is partly appropriate to the actual situation currently. Before joining the program of university, people always question themselves an occupation in future after they complete the program. This is a good message as a good reference for educational policy makers as curriculum developers at universities, who should concern this for their future program development.

Table 5: Result of testing hypotheses

Hypotheses	Decision
HI: An increase in tangibles causes a rise in student satisfaction	**Supported**
H2: An increase in reliability causes a rise in student satisfaction	**Supported**
H3: An increase in responsiveness causes a rise in student satisfaction	**Supported**
H4: An increase in assurance causes a rise in student satisfaction	**Supported**
H5: An increase in empathy causes a rise in student satisfaction	**Supported**
H6: An increase in affordability causes a rise in student satisfaction	**Supported**
H7: An increase in employable causes a rise in student satisfaction	**Supported**

Testing differences in quality service between public and private university

In order to test how different in services between public university, e.g. public university and private university, the test of analysis of variance (ANOVA) is used. As pointed out previously, there are seven factors extracted and investigated their impact on student satisfaction, those factors are tested by two universities. As depicted in table 6, five factors are significantly different betweetn thow two university style, e.g. tangibility of service with significant at 5%, affordability of services with significant at 1%, empathy on students with significant at 5%, Responsiveness of service at 5%, and employability (10%). Because average scores of five factors just mentioned of private university are higher that of public university, the students of private university confirms that the program of private university is more tangible, affordable, empathetic, responsive, and employable than that of public university. This can be consistent with practice, because, in general, the private

organization is more dynamic than the public publication. The innovative process is often flexible than that of public university whom is much depended on accepted long procedure of Ministry of Education and Training. In addition, evaluation of students on overall satisfaction is lightly different between private university and public university.

Table 6: Testing differences between private and public university
Report

	Public University			Private University			Total		
	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Tangibility of Services	4.76	109	.961	5.07	123	1.199	4.92	232	1.102
Reliability of Services	5.09	109	1.159	4.97	123	1.324	5.03	232	1.248
Assurance of Services	4.63	109	1.094	4.83	123	1.316	4.74	232	1.218
Affordability of Services	4.43	109	1.329	5.08	123	1.534	4.78	232	1.475
Empathy on Students	4.59	109	1.172	5.04	123	1.451	4.83	232	1.344
Response of Services	4.81	109	1.149	5.22	123	1.252	5.03	232	1.219
Employability after Completion	4.40	109	1.248	4.76	123	1.532	4.59	232	1.414

ANOVA Table

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Tangibility of Services * University	Between Groups	(Combined)	5.326	1	5.326	4.450	.036
	Within Groups		275.278	230	1.197		
	Total		280.603	231			
Reliability of Services * University	Between Groups	(Combined)	.892	1	.892	.572	.450
	Within Groups		358.952	230	1.561		
	Total		359.845	231			
Assurance of Services * University	Between Groups	(Combined)	2.225	1	2.225	1.502	.222
	Within Groups		340.736	230	1.481		
	Total		342.961	231			
Affordability of Services * University	Between Groups	(Combined)	24.424	1	24.424	11.754	.001
	Within Groups		477.921	230	2.078		
	Total		502.345	231			
Empathy on Students * University	Between Groups	(Combined)	11.885	1	11.885	6.746	.010
	Within Groups		405.219	230	1.762		
	Total		417.103	231			
Responsiveness of Services * University	Between Groups	(Combined)	9.471	1	9.471	6.523	.011
	Within Groups		333.930	230	1.452		
	Total		343.401	231			
Employability after Completion * University	Between Groups	(Combined)	7.513	1	7.513	3.803	.052
	Within Groups		454.401	230	1.976		
	Total		461.914	231			
Overall Satisfaction * University	Between Groups	(Combined)	4.006	1	4.006	2.888	.091
	Within Groups		319.080	230	1.387		
	Total		323.086	231			

VI. DISCUSSION

The study presents a study of students' views on the quality of academic and administrative services provided by the universities. Using a modified SERVQUAL instrument gaps between students' expectations of service quality and their actual perceived service experience were computed for some academic units and for the university's administrative services.

At first, five factors of tangibility, reliability, appearance, responsiveness, are empathy have significantly positive impacts on satisfaction, this finding is appropriate with Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry (1991) and James & Yun (2018), because James and Yun also agree that the student mostly satisfied with their academic and personal development. Second, the finding is also confirmed a different result with Lenton (2015), who did not found student satisfaction, is depended on expenditure academic per student. This can be explained the measure of expenditure academic of Lenton in value, while that of this study is measured in Likert seven point scales. Third, the finding is consistent with that of James & Yun (2018), who found that students' expectation for employability before entering the higher education did not have a negative impact on student satisfaction.

The result also derive an interesting finding based on testing differences of quality service of two style of university, e.g. private university and public university, which students have seemly higher evaluation on tangibility, affordability, empathy, responsiveness, and employability.

VII. CONCLUSION

Based on the survey with an approach of exploratory factor anaysis, we realize that one or more service quality attributes have important contributions to student satisfaction. These construtions can be seen in the management's ability of the university. The students' expecations toward their satisfaction are depended on the university who must have tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, service assurance, empathy, affordability, and employabiliy. In addition, the students think of their choices around of dynamic, flexible and useful curriculum or program for their future, which the private university is concerned as the main point in the students' mind.

As estimated from three regression models, in which dependents respectively are satisfaction of students, good curriculum, and training quality, we found that employability after completion is a leading factor to improve satisfaction, good curriculum, training quality. It means a practical is appropriate to attract students as to give good chance for students getting good job after their graduation. In general, the universities should be empathetic, tangible, responsive, and employable to meet satisfaction. In order to meet a good curriculum, the university should be employable, tangible, and reliable. In addition, the training quality is taken into account if the universities pay more attention to employability of service, empathy on students, and reliability of services.

We found a significant difference in tangibility of service, affordability of services, empathy on students, and response of services between the public university and private university. But a significant difference in reliability of services, assurance of services, and employability after completion of students between those two universities, is not found.

Evaluation of students on overall satisfaction, curriculum and training quality to the public university and private university are lightly confirmed existing differences. It means all of students satisfy the program of two universities, as qualify that the public university and private university are good curriculum. As a result, there isn't a big surprise, because the public university and the private university are issued with their program based on the common framework directly supervised by Ministry of Education and Training.

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