WHAT INDONESIAN STUDENTS WANT FROM A UNIVERSITY?
THE CASE FOR AEC 2015

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ABSTRACT

This research studied the quality dimensions of a university according to Indonesian students. Research was done by doing in depth-interview with students. Using content analysis method, research result showed that SERVQUAL is able to capture dimensions Indonesian student used when assessing university quality. Tangible is the mostly used dimension, with responsiveness become the least used. Assurance and responsiveness is strongly tied to lecturer competence in academic field, technical experience, and class teaching/delivery. The reliability dimension is related with curriculum and alumni performance in the workplace. The university may present themselves better to its potential student candidates by showing how well they perform in those 5 dimensions.

Keywords: Indonesian Students, Quality Dimensions, Higher Education Institution, Servqual

INTRODUCTION

Starting from 2015, the ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nation) member countries will establish ASEAN Economic Community (AEC). AEC aims to transform ASEAN into a single market wherethe flow of goods, capital, and labor among ASEAN countries is free from tariffs (Indonesia Ministry of Commerce, 2014). In the service industry, including in the field of education, AEC will enhance cooperation among ASEAN University Network (AUN) members to increase mobility for both students and staffwithin the region(ASEAN Secretariat, 2008). With the world being more global than ever, international education may lead to significant contribution for a nation's economy such as in Australia (UNESCO, 2013)

Recent data (2010-2012) from the United Nation showed that around thirty thousand Indonesian students study abroad (UN, 2014). With exception of Singapore and Malaysia who consistently become main destinations for Indonesian students, the number of Indonesian students in other ASEAN countries

is relatively low. Main destination countries for Indonesian students are Australia, USA, Malaysia, Japan, and Germany (Irandoust, 2014). AEC 2015 is a great momentum for universities around ASEAN countries to promote themselves and attract more Indonesian students to enroll.

Quality of the higher education is one of many factors contributing to Indonesian students' hesitance to study abroad in ASEAN countries. Data showed that only universities from Singapore are able to put themselves among top universities in Asia (THE, 2010). However, in the era of consumer-driven marketing, consumer definition of quality is as important as the objective standard of quality. Quality is an abstract concept that defined personally by the consumers according to their perception (Garvin, 1987). Moreover in the service industry, the nature of the service makes it harder to objectively measure service quality (Meng*et al*, 2009). Therefore, there is a need to define dimensions consumer used in assessing a product (goods/services) quality (Talmacean and Domnica, 2013).

This research studied the quality dimensions of university according to Indonesian students. Knowledge emerged from this study is useful for stakeholders in ASEAN universities, especially in modifying the marketing strategy (STP) of their institution. By doing so, the universities may prepare better for AEC 2015 and capture the opportunities available.

RESEARCH PROBLEMS
1. What are the dimensions for measuring service quality in a university according to Indonesians students?

RELATED STUDIES
In order to survive from its macro environmental conditions, higher education institutions around the world should implement marketing concept where quality becomes the key term (Simic and Carapic, 2008). Some countries in the world, such as the European Union, launch a program on improving the quality of higher education institutions across Europe (Kecetep and Ozkan, 2013). Research showed that in higher education institutions, consumer (student) satisfaction is highly influenced by their perception of service quality (Chang *et al*, 2012). Therefore, measuring service quality is an inevitable part of how university may keep themselves competitive.

Research has long support the notion that consumer view quality as multidimensional (many aspects) rather than single dimension (Garvin, 1987; Zeithaml, 1988; Brucks*et al*, 2000; Krystallis*et al*, 2007). Therefore, multi-dimensional measurement of consumer's perception of quality is preferable rather than a single dimension measurement.

As a multi-dimensional measurement of service quality, SERVQUAL has been widely used to define and measure the quality dimensions in higher education institution (Kassim and Zain,2010; Ansary*et al*, 2014). SERVQUAL measures the gap between customer expectations and the perceived quality of delivered services

in 5 dimensions which are assurance, empathy, responsiveness, reliability, and tangible (Kim and Feldman, 2011). Other measurement of service quality includes two dimensional approach from Lizhi and Liangqing (2014) and three dimensional model from Lehtinen and Lehtinen (1991) and Pereda*et al* (2007). However, measuring quality in higher education institution is a complex matter (Ansary*et al*, 2014). The term "customers" in higher education institution is vary, and each stakeholders perceived quality differently (Jackson *et* al, 2011; Sopon and Cuza, 2013). Moreover, the usage of SERVQUAL model to measure quality in higher education institution needs further exploration to strengthen the model (Lizhi and Liangqing, 2014).

Considering its popularity and validity, this research uses SERVQUAL as a framework in explaining multiple quality dimensions of higher education institution. However, the research also seeks other dimensions that may emerge from this research.

METHODOLOGY

This research is an explorative and qualitative research on the consumer-defined quality dimensions of university. The data was taken by doing in-depth interview with 5 respondents who represent Indonesian students. To ensure a better view of the topics under study, there are male and female respondents, undergraduate and graduate students, and ranging cumulative GPA among respondents. The in-depth interview takes place on July 2014, with semi-structured interview using a guideline. The audio recording from the interview is available and later used as a basis for content analysis. The detailed lists of the respondents may be found in table 1.

Table 1 List of Respondents

Respondent	Gender	Level of Study	Cumulative GPA (out of 4.0)	Field of Study
1	Male	Undergraduate	3.84	Management
2	Female	Undergraduate	3.75	Management
3	Male	Graduate (Master)	n.a	Management
4	Male	Undergraduate	2.83	Management
5	Female	Undergarduate	3.31	Management

For data analysis, deductive (directed) content analysis is used because the literature and existing theory on this topic, especially SERVQUAL are available (Moretti*et al*, 2011). First, literature review was done to make a list of attributes used by consumer when defining university quality. Next, the deductive content analysis was done based on previous list, while trying to find new attributes/dimensions if available. The measurement uses phrases as unit of

analysis because it is able to catch the concept of university quality better than words (Cooper & Schindler, 2011)

RESULT
The first step of the research is developing the attributes list for the deductive content analysis. The attributes are specific items in each of SERVQUAL dimensions, especially in higher education institution context. There are works fromKassim and Zain (2010), Jackson*et al* (2011), Sopon andCuza, (2013), Ansary*et al* (2014), and Lizhi and Liangqing (2014). The attributes list may be exhaustively long, but limited up to ten attributes per each dimension based on their popularity in the literatures. To make the result presented clearly, all of the quotes from in-depth interview will be translated into English.
The study showed that SERVQUAL was able to capture Indonesian student definition of university quality. However, among SERVQUAL dimensions, tangibility is the only dimension mentioned directly by the respondents. Dimensions mentioned by the respondents include lecturer's competency, learning process quality, campus management, and alumni/graduate quality. The attributes from those dimensions then transferred into SERVQUAL dimensions and fit in well. The full list of attributes and quality dimensions according to SERVQUAL is available on table 2.
Content analysis reveals 2 dimensions mentioned by all research participants, which are facility quality (tangibility in SERVQUAL) and lecturer's competency. As has been discussed before, all of the attributes in facility quality dimensions may directly transferred to tangibility. For lecturer's competency, the attributes mentioned fall into assurance and empathy dimension in SERVQUAL. The full list of attributes and dimen
Regarding the tangibility dimension, all respondents mentioned internet connection (Wi-Fi) as the most important aspect. Respondents claim that Wi-Fi is a paramount service needed in university today. Wi-Fi enables student to search literatures on the internet and communicate with other people (friends, lecturers, campus staff, etc.):
'*We really need internet connection to support learning process. In internet, there are various source of information…….. It broadens our horizon of the world out there*' (respondent 4)

Table 2 Dimensions and Attributes Emerged from The Study

Dimensions	Attributes
Assurance	Trust resulting from staff conduct/behavior
	Objectivity and fairness in scoring
	Up-to-date information in lectures and workshops
	Field experience or research experience
	Lecturer's academic competence/expertise in their field
	Professional act from academic staff
	Compliance to national standard in higher education
Empathy	Lecturer's availability to discuss with students
	Lecturer's openness in discuss with students
	Usage of supportive language
	Understanding of student's specific needs
	Warm and caring act to students (ex: smile)
	Willingness to help student's problem
Responsiveness	Full access to campus online registration system
	Lecturer's ability to answer student questions at the moment
	Academic staff ability in handling student's administrative problems
Reliability	Ability to stimulate critical thinking
	Curriculum meets the need of student
	Balanced theoretical-practical approach
	Teaching methods according to academic demands
	Fulfillment of promises to students
	Alumni performance in the workplace and society
Tangible	Internet connection
	Laboratory
	Library
	Classroom teaching support equipment (LCD, sound system, white board, furniture, etc.)
	Student lounge
	Parking areas
	Sport center
	Accommodation for student
	Garden and open areas

The library, once known as the source of information, has been losing its position to internet. Respondents rely on internet to search information, and going to the library only when the information from the internet is incomplete or doubted. Library may become more favorable to the students by arranging its place into a comfortable place (student lounge) for student to work. As said by respondents 2: '*Student always has assignments. For the convenience when doing assignments, we don't need to search a place somewhere else. We may take university as our second home*'

Another important attributes in tangible dimension is laboratory or any relevant body that may help the students accelerating their skills in their field of study. As for business students, they may ask for a funding/finance institution that will help them grow up their business. Such finance/funding institution may provide

business assistance by academician or business person for student's business project:

"When we need fund, we hope campus may provide it with cheaper rate than bank. It really helps us in growing our business" (respondent 5)

The SERVQUAL dimension of assurance, mostly tied to lecturer's competence. When the faculty members (lecturers) are academically and technically competent, students tend to trust that their university is providing high quality services:

"The easiest way to see it (lecturer quality) is from their experience. We can see their CV (Curriculum Vitae), what research they've been done… It's all in their track record" (respondent 3)

Similar statement was made by respondent 1, stating that a lecturer's competency is easily seen from how the lecturerdelivers the material/topic in the class:

"They (the lecturer) should master their teaching material. Sometimes we see lecturer who feel less confident with what they teach. I think it's normal. But they have to show their best!" (respondent 1)

Regarding the dimension of empathy, respondents explain it in term of lecturer's action toward the students. Respondents stresses that a high-quality lecturer is the one who able to raise their student enthusiasm in learning and nurture student's thinking skill. For that purpose, lecturer should have a warm and polite attitude toward the student. A strict or indifferent lecturer will make students hesitate to learn more and discuss topics with their lecturer. As some respondents expressed:

"I need a lecturer who is willing to hear my voice. Lecturer is not always right" (respondent 5)

"I love a lecturer who has no distance with their student. We can talk easily, discuss any matters happily" (respondent 4)

The reliability dimension is mainly seen from attributes related to alumni performance in the workplace and society. As respondent 3 said:

"We should hear from the society, whether our alumni are producing many complaints in the work place…. Complaints like laziness and irresponsibility for example"

Reliability may be seen from how well the curriculum meet student needs. Respondent 2 exemplified such statement:

"I don't want to learn only superficial matters. I want the lecture enables me to take action in the real world" (respondent 2)

Finally, dimension of responsiveness is the least discussed by the participants. Attributes used mainly focused on how well and how fast the universities fix student's problem, such as problem in the registration system:

"When we register for the new semester, for example; we want the system to be reliable and fast. Otherwise, we will get very stressful" (respondent 1)

DISCUSSION AND APPLICATION

The content analysis has showed that SERVQUAL able to capture attributes used by Indonesian students in assessing university quality. A dimension mostly used is

tangibility, with responsiveness becoming the least used. Assurance and empathy is in moderate usage, with both of them tied specifically to lecturer. Reliability dimension is used occasionally by the respondents. Therefore, SERVQUAL may be used as a basis in measuring student's perception of higher education institution in Indonesia. Of course, further adjustment for the model's specific usage in higher education institution is needed.

There are several important implications arise from research findings. First, since Indonesian student sees tangibility as the most important dimension, university should make it priority. The basic requirement for most students is a reliable internet connection through wi-fi. University may seek ways to provide a reliable/stable, safe, and fast internet connection throughout campus. Along with this, university may equip their students with skills needed in leveraging study result through internet usage. Workshops about internet security, useful apps, digging information on the internet, etc. may be developed. University may provide student lounge as well, as a place for student to work, socialize, discuss, and leisure.

When university outside Indonesia doing a promotion program in Indonesia, showing campus' facility should become main concern. Highlighted facilities are the wi-fi access, computer laboratory, or any laboratory supporting the study. Photos and videos should available in brochures and campus website. That way, potential students from Indonesia may have a good first impression about the campus.

Second, since the assurance and empathy quality dimensions are strongly tied to lecturer, it is imperative for the university to invest in improving the competence of its faculty member. Indonesian student asses these quality dimensions from the lecturer, and take it as a measurement for university quality. Lecturer should competent in their academic field, active in research, has some field/technical experience, and able to delivers the material in the way most suitable with students' need. Lecturers are a role model for students along their study. Therefore, feedback from students about lecturer's quality is paramount.

Highly competent lecturer may convey trust and confidence from student about their university. In the long-term, it serves as a reason for alumni to spread good WOM (word of mouth) about the university. It will attract potential student candidate to enroll, as they see testimonial from their seniors, friends, or colleagues about the university quality. Moreover, highly competent lecturer able to create a remarkable personal experience for student while taking their study in university. As one of service characteristic is co-creation, personal experience is really important in shaping consumer's perception of quality.

Third, university should create a curriculum that ensures their alumni are having a greater chance to excel at the workplace. Indonesian studentsasses reliability quality dimension by seeing how well a university alumni performs at the workplace. Such performance is believed made by sound combination of theory and practice. Therefore, it is imperative for university to mention about their

alumni performance to the potential student candidate. University may give testimonies from successful alumni in order to prove university reliability.

Given all of the fact above, maintaining relationship with university alumni from Indonesia is highly relevant in attracting potential student candidate from Indonesia. It is also impressive to develop forms of cooperation with successful alumnus. One good example is the cooperation between Bantaeng districts major, Prof. DR H.M. Nurdin Abdullah, with Kyushu University as his alma mater. Graduated from Kyushu University agricultural faculty, Nurdin cooperates with his alma mater in modernizing the agricultural and marine sector in his district (Abdurrahman, 2014)**.** The free publicity arise from such cooperation may attract more potential student candidate to enroll.

RESEARCH LIMITATION

This study gathered data from management student only. For further research, students from other field of social study may be joined as respondents, as well as students from science field. Further research may involve doctoral students as well. This will strengthen the research as the validity and reliability increases.

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