

Factors Influencing the Students' Perceptions of the Quality of Education Services at Hue University in Vietnam

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ABSTRACT In today's competitive higher education environment in Vietnam, higher education institutions have focussed more on quality education services to improve students' satisfaction, which is considered an important factor for attracting and retaining students and evaluating the success of these higher education institutions, as a result. This research aimed to examine Vietnamese students' perceptions about the quality of education services offered at Hue University in Vietnam. The data were obtained from the questionnaires completed by 2933 students from four-university members of Hue University in Central Vietnam. The research results showed that the students were generally satisfied with the quality of education services provided by Hue University. In addition, students' satisfaction at Hue University is most affected by their perceptions about access to education services and the educational environment. The study also provided several implications, for Hue University in particular and other Vietnamese higher education institutions in general, to enhance their education services to improve the level of education service quality for attracting and retaining students.

INTRODUCTION

In a 2011 study, Harvey stated that "institution-wide student feedback about the quality of their total educational experience is an area of growing activity in higher education institutions around the world" (2011: 4). This statement currently remains valid in the higher education sector with an even more significance. students' satisfaction on education services provided by higher education institutions (HEIs) has been a

focus of various studies for the last few decades (Jurkowitz et al. 2006; Lounsbury et al. 2015; Nguyen et al. 2020; Postema and Markham 2018; Tan and Kek 2014; Yeo 2009; Zineldin 2017).

HEIs need the detailed information of the quality of their provided education services so that, they can have an overview on the education services they have offered and how those services meet students' increasing needs to offer priorities for financial resource allocation and to improve marketing and operation plans for more enrollments and admissions (Lounsbury et al. 2015; Nguyen et al. 2020; Teeroovengadum et al. 2016 2019; Zineldin 2017). Regarding enrolled students as important consumers of ed-

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education services provided by HEIs, it is necessary and suitable to ask those students, in a systematic and appropriate way, how satisfied they feel with the education services they receive at their HEIs (Cook 1997; Darlaston-Jones et al. 2013; Lee and Tai 2018; Jaafar et al. 2017; Santini et al. 2017).

Today it is significant to carry out the appropriate strategies to strengthen their competitiveness capabilities in attracting and retaining students by offering education services of a high quality, seeking competitive advantages compared to other HEIs (Hayes 2017; Postema and Markham 2018; Tin et al. 2017). In fact, HEIs often have two important processes highly depending on the used marketing strategy: First, the process of entry admissions of good students after high school graduation; and the second process is retaining these students for the registered training courses at their HEIs until graduation (Demaris and Kritsonis 2018; Lee and Tai 2018; Jain et al. 2010).

Students' retention is often associated with their loyalty to their HEIs, and also relates to student satisfaction with received education services (Brown and Mazzarol 2019; Teerooven-gadam et al. 2016, 2019). Hennig-Thurau et al. (2011) argued that if students have a good impression and satisfaction on their HEIs, they are more likely to be satisfied with their HEIs, and therefore their loyalty level toward their HEIs will remain high. Furthermore, students' retention is associated with the concept of persistence, and in this manner, Santini et al. (2017) supposed that students' overall satisfaction with their received education services at their HEIs is a prevailing indicator of HEIs persistence.

It can be argued that education service quality is a significant motivation and driver of marketing strategies in HEIs and is highly related to student satisfaction. Actually, the education service quality may bring about favorable or unfavorable attitudes of students towards their HEIs and may influence 'Word-of-Mouth Marketing' (Brown and Mazzarol 2019; Demaris and Kritsonis 2018; Lee and Tai 2018).

Students' satisfaction is closely associated with how students perceive and evaluate the expected and realistic outcomes and educational experiences they have during their learning at HEIs (Cardona and Bravo 2018; Elliott and Healy

2011; Elliott and Shin 2012; Nguyen et al. 2020). In order for a training program to survive and improve in this competitive tertiary education sector, it is vitally important to consider students' satisfaction in HEIs from a more customer-oriented perspective as this provides significant dimensions to planning activities and improvements of HEIs (DeShields et al. 2015). In other words, graduates are regarded as primary customers experiencing education services offered by HEIs, thanks to the fact that the students select the favorite study programs by themselves or their families, then they pay the tuition fees, and help advertise their HEIs if they are satisfied with such education services (Lee and Tai 2018; Sultan and Wong 2018).

According to Appleton-Knapp and Kentler (2016), there are two kinds of factors determining students' satisfaction toward education services provided by HEIs, which are institutional and personal. Institutional factors include assessing the quality of training programs such as the curriculum, academic staff, and teaching methods, quality and promptness of the lecturers' feedback as well as the clarity of their expectations, teaching staff quality, infrastructure such as facilities, classrooms, campus, library, etc. Personal factors include gender, age, personal expectations, temperament, background, learning styles, and students' average grade point (Appleton-Knapp and Kentler 2016; Cardona and Bravo 2018).

Many research results have found a relationship between education service quality and students' satisfaction at HEIs. The qualities of the administrative staff at HEIs include reliability, responsiveness, caring attitudes, transparency, fairness, respect, and cooperation with current students during their learning time at HEIs (Cardona and Bravo 2018). It is true that cooperation, kindness, and responsiveness of administrative staff play an important part in improving students' satisfaction levels in HEIs (Hasan et al. 2009; Weerasinghe and Fernando 2018). The study of Postema and Markham (2018) indicated dimensions of students' perceived service quality such as teaching quality, student advising, tuition costs, financial assistance, facilities, and curriculum. On the other hand, other dimensions of students' perception of service quality in HEIs include eight factors such as access to

education-related services, university reputation, training program issues, industry links, understandings of staff, and other non-academic aspects (Appleton-Knapp and Kentler 2016; Hoang et al. 2018; Quraishi et al. 2017; Wang and Tseng 2012). In the study relating to the significance of students' perceptions, Zineldin (2017) noted that the measurement of students' perceptions about the quality of education service offered by an HEI could reflect the level of students' overall satisfaction on their HEI. Zineldin (2017) also found out the five quality dimensions in measuring satisfaction, including object, process, infrastructure, interaction and communication, and atmosphere quality or namely 5 Qs' model.

In order to measure the quality of education services provided by HEIs, the SERVQUAL instrument (Parasuraman et al. 1985, 1988, 1994) has been widely used and highly appreciated in numerous studies. The SERVQUAL has been utilised to measure the education service quality across five dimensions, from the perspective of HEIs staff or students, which are: (1) Tangibility including physical facilities, equipment, and appearance of HEI staff; (2) Reliability including the ability to perform the promised education service promptly and accurately; (3) Responsiveness including the willingness to help students and provide prompt advice support and related services; (4) Security including the ability of HEI staff to demonstrate competence, confidence, courtesy, reliability, and security; and (5) Empathy including the ability to care and provide personalised attention support to individual students (Oliveira and Ferreira 2009; Parasuraman et al. 1985, 1988, 1994; Tan and Kek 2014). Taking these five dimensions into consideration, the education service quality is determined as the difference between students' expectations and perceptions of received service delivery quality. In general, students are dissatisfied when the experienced education service quality is worse than what they expected from the promised service (Parasuraman et al. 1985, 1988, 1994).

In Vietnam, several studies have researched the students' perceptions of the education service quality in Vietnamese HEIs such as Nguyen (2013), Nguyen et al. (2020), Truong et al. (2016), or Bui et al. (2016). Nguyen (2013) used

the SERVQUAL scale to measure a Vietnamese HEI's quality of service, the findings of this study showed that the three specific dimensions of that Vietnamese university's higher education service included assurance, tangible elements, responsiveness, particular highly satisfied with the assurance dimension. The study of Hoang et al. (2018) measured students' satisfaction by using the SERVQUAL scale by Parasuraman et al. (1985). The key findings of this study showed that five elements in the SERVQUAL model affected the satisfaction of the students in the order of declining importance as follows: Tangibility, Assurance, Reliability, Empathy, and Responsiveness. They also realized that there were no differences between male and female student satisfaction and first-year students and fifth-year students (Hoang et al. 2018).

Overall, there have been quite numerous studies on the students' perceptions of the quality of education service at HEIs in the world as well as in Vietnam. However, no studies relating to students' satisfaction toward education service quality at Hue University have been done so far. To fill this gap, this research was conducted to explore the factors influencing students' perceptions of the quality of education service at Hue University in Vietnam.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Participants

The convenience sampling method used to recruit students who volunteered to answer the questionnaire survey. The questionnaires were distributed to 3000 Vietnamese students of four-university members of Hue University, Vietnam, of which 2933 questionnaires returned, for a 97.76 percent return rate, which exceeds the 30 percent response rate most researchers require for analysis (Dillman 2000). The sample of this study drawn from 2993 students who completed the survey instrument. There were more females (72.2%) than males (27.8%) among the 2933 Vietnamese undergraduate students who surveyed. Of these, 869 (29.6%) were the University of Economics students, 767 (26.2%) were the University of Medicine and Pharmacy students, 686 (23.4%) were from the University of Foreign Languages, and 611 (20.8%) were from the Universi-

ty of Agriculture and Forestry students. 532 (18.1%) of these students were in freshmen, 968 (33%) were in sophomores, 749 (25.5%) were in juniors, 550 (18.8 %) were in seniors, 101 (3.4%) were in fifth-year seniors, and 33 (1.2%) were in sixth-year seniors. Table 1 showed the distribution of participants.

Table 1: Demographic information for the current sample (n = 2933)

	<i>n</i>	%
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	816	27.8
Female	2117	72.2
<i>University</i>		
University of Economics	869	29.6
University of Medicine and Pharmacy	767	26.2
University of Foreign Languages	686	23.4
University of Agriculture and Forestry	611	20.8
<i>Academic Year of Students</i>		
Freshman	532	18.1
Sophomore	968	33.0
Junior	749	25.5
Senior	550	18.8
Fifth-year senior	101	3.4
Sixth-year senior	33	1.2

n: Number of participants; %: Percentage

Measure

Questionnaires designed to survey undergraduate students from freshmen to sixth-year seniors in four member universities of Hue University, Thua Thien Hue province, Vietnam. This research data collection lasted for three months, from October 2019 to December 2019. First, social-demographic items introduced in the questionnaire. Then, Vietnamese undergraduate 'students' perception of education service quality was measured by a total of 22 items. The responses of the participants provided in five different levels based on a 5-point Likert scale (Croasmun and Ostrom 2011).

Analysis

All participants were provided informed consent after receiving an explanation of the purpose of the research. The ethics committee of Hue University, Vietnam, approved the research. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

(SPSS) version 20 used for data analysis. The coding procedure was performed as follows: 1 = Very dissatisfied, 2 = Somewhat dissatisfied, 3 = Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, 4 = Somewhat satisfied, 5 = Very satisfied.

According to Narli (2010), the interval width of the 5-Likert scale should be computed in order to set up the group boundary value for result discussions. Interval Width = (Upper value – Lower value)/n = (5-1)/5 = 0.8. Group boundary values were built that help to discuss research results based on the above interval width, which are pointed in Table 2.

Table 2: Group boundary values of 5 Likert scale

<i>Judgment scale for the perception of satisfying</i>	
1.00 – 1.80	Very dissatisfied
1.81 – 2.60	Somewhat dissatisfied
2.61 – 3.40	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
3.41 – 4.20	Somewhat satisfied
4.21 – 5.00	Very satisfied

RESULTS

The reliability of the scale (value from 0 to 1) is considered low if the Alpha Coefficient is $\alpha < .4$. The internal consistency reliability estimate for this sample was 0.73 for Access to Education Services, .75 for Facilities, Teaching Equipment, .76 for Educational Environment, .80 for Educational Activities, .84 for the development, and fulfilling civic responsibilities. Then the scores, as well as the sum of all items on the scale, were calculated. These are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Internal consistency

<i>Scale</i>	<i>Items</i>	<i>Cronbach's alpha</i>
Access to education services	4	.73
Facilities, teaching equipment	4	.75
Educational environment	5	.76
Educational activities	4	.80
The development and fulfilling civic responsibilities	5	.84

In order to evaluate the content validity of the scale, we calculated the Corrected Item - Total Correlation. If the correlation coefficient between each item and the total scale is more than or equal to .3, the scale has a content value. As

shown in Table 4, all the scale had the correlations $r > .3$, and therefore the scale ensured the content value, the items agreed with each other in clarifying the content to be measured.

Table 4: Item-total statistics

Items	Corrected item - Total correlation	Cronbach's alpha if item deleted
A.1	.51	.92
A.2	.52	.92
A.3	.52	.92
A.4	.52	.92
B.5	.57	.92
B.6	.54	.92
B.7	.56	.92
B.8	.56	.92
C.9	.64	.92
C.10	.57	.92
C.11	.59	.92
C.12	.57	.92
C.13	.45	.92
D.14	.65	.92
D.15	.66	.92
D.16	.65	.92
D.17	.61	.92
E.18	.65	.92
E.19	.63	.92
E.20	.63	.92
E.21	.60	.92
E.22	.51	.92

A. The Field Satisfaction Scores

The field satisfaction scores were the mean score of all the questions belonging to that field. There were five fields to be examined to take the students' opinions, including Access to Education Services; Facilities, Teaching Equipment;

Educational Environment; Educational Activities; and The development and fulfilling civic responsibilities. In general, the field satisfaction scores were at the satisfaction level ($3.4 \leq M < 4.2$) as the results showed that. In the fields, the indicators that had the highest points of satisfaction were 'Access to Education Services' and 'Educational Environment' ($M = 3.92$), and the lowest point of satisfaction was 'Facilities, Teaching Equipment' ($M = 3.54$). The survey results of the satisfaction scores for specific fields are as follows:

The Satisfaction Scores with Access to Education Services

Hue University measured student satisfaction with access to Education Services with four criteria: providing sufficient and timely information about enrollment and admission; making convenient admission procedures; the tuition fees and contributions are in keeping with the HEI regulations; state policies provide good support for specific objects (children of wounded soldiers, martyrs, poor households, ethnic minorities, etc.).

The survey results in Table 5 indicated that, among the four items of the satisfaction scores with access to Education Services, the indicator that the highest point was Providing sufficient and timely information about enrollment and admission ($M = 4.09$, $SD = .74$); followed by Making convenient admission procedures ($M = 3.99$, $SD = .76$); State policies assist for specific objects (children of wounded soldiers, martyrs, poor households, ethnic minorities, etc.) ($M =$

Table 5: The satisfaction scores with access to education services

	Level					M	SD
	1	2	3	4	5		
Providing sufficient and timely information about enrollment and admission	.30	1.50	16.80	51.30	30.10	4.09	.74
Making convenient admission procedures	.34	1.77	22.16	50.05	25.67	3.99	.76
The tuition fees and contributions are in compatible with Hue University regulations	1.16	5.73	36.00	41.53	15.58	3.65	.85
State policies assist for specific students (children of wounded soldiers, martyrs, poor households, ethnic minorities, etc.)	.41	1.64	24.65	47.97	25.33	3.96	.78
Total						3.92	.58

M: Mean; SD: Standard deviation

3.96, SD = .78); and the lowest point was The tuition fees and contributions are in keeping with the school regulations (M = 3.65, SD = .85).

The Satisfaction Scores with Facilities and Teaching Equipment

Hue University measured students' satisfaction with facilities and teaching equipment with four criteria: classrooms, lecture halls meeting requirements for acreage, solidity, electric fans, lighting, sound, university hygiene, etc.; IT systems (computers, internet, etc.) support training well; providing enough books/journals in the library, references, equipment, and service time; student dormitories meeting requirements for space, convenience, safety, university hygiene, etc.

The survey results in Table 6 indicated that, among the four items of the satisfaction scores with Facilities and teaching equipment, the indicator that the highest point was Providing enough books/journals in library, references, equipment, and service time (M = 3.79, SD = .82); followed by Classrooms, lecture halls meeting requirements for space, solidity, electric fans, lighting, sound, cleanliness, etc. (M = 3.56, SD = 0.97); Student dormitories meeting requirements for space, convenience, safety, cleanliness, etc (M = 3.47, SD = 0.77); and the lowest point was IT systems (computers, internet, etc.) support training well (M = 3.36, SD = 1.00).

The Satisfaction Scores with the Educational Environment

Hue University measured student satisfaction with Educational environment with five cri-

teria: the university focussing on receiving from student's feedback on the education service quality provided at HEI; being friendly, kind, and united in staff-student relationships, etc.; being enthusiastic and responsible lecturers supporting the students, etc.; shade, light, and air in the natural environment; security, safety, and effective in the university campus.

The survey results in Table 7 showed that, among the five items of the satisfaction scores with educational environment, the indicator that the highest point was Shade, light and air, in a natural environment (M = 4.04, SD = .81); followed by Security, safety, and effectiveness in schools and surroundings (M = 4.01, SD = .81); Enthusiastic and responsible lecturers supporting the students, etc (M = 3.99, SD = .76); Being friendly, kind, and united in staff-student relationships, etc. (M = 3.86, SD = .77); and the lowest point was The university focusing on receiving from students' feedback on the education service quality provided at university (M = 3.69, SD = .84).

The Satisfaction Scores with Educational Activities

Hue University measured student satisfaction with Educational activities with four criteria: effectiveness and quality of credit-based training program; lecturers concentrating on developing student's self-study, self-research, creative thinking, practical skills, etc; the forms and methods of evaluating students' learning results are diverse and objective; organizing various future job education (providing information, career opportunities, and seminars with employers, etc.).

Table 6: The satisfaction scores with facilities, teaching equipment

	<i>Level</i>					<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>		
Classrooms, lecture halls meet requirements for space, solidity, electric fans, lighting, sound, cleanliness, etc. IT systems (computers, internet, etc.) support training well	1.84	12.65	29.70	39.48	16.33	3.56	.97
Providing enough books/journals in library, references, equipment, and service time	.58	3.89	30.86	45.28	19.40	3.79	.82
Student dormitories meet requirements for space, convenience, safety, cleanliness, etc	.99	3.24	54.24	30.96	10.57	3.47	.77
Total						3.54	.67

M: Mean; SD: Standard deviation

Table 7: The satisfaction scores with the educational environment

	<i>Level</i>					<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>		
The university focuses on receiving from students' feedback on the education service quality provided at university	.78	6.10	32.90	43.95	16.26	3.69	.84
Being friendly, kind, and united in staff-student relationship, etc.	.20	2.42	28.84	47.83	20.70	3.86	.77
Enthusiastic and responsible lecturers supporting the students, etc.	.41	1.74	21.89	50.12	25.84	3.99	.76
Shade, light and air in a natural environment	.38	3.24	18.62	47.22	30.55	4.04	.81
Security, safety, and effectiveness in university campus	.44	3.03	20.25	47.46	28.81	4.01	.81
Total						3.92	.57

M: Mean; SD: Standard deviation

The survey results in Table 8 showed that, among the four items of the satisfaction scores with educational activities, the indicator that the highest point was organizing various careers education (providing information, career opportunities, and seminars with employers, etc.) ($M = 3.82$, $SD = .80$); followed by Lecturers concentrating on developing students' self-study, self-research, creative thinking, practical skills, etc ($M = 3.73$, $SD = .78$); the forms and methods of evaluating students' learning results are diverse and objective ($M = 3.70$, $SD = .74$); and the lowest point was Effectiveness and quality of credit-based training program ($M = 3.69$, $SD = .81$).

The Satisfaction Scores with the Development and Fulfilling Civic Responsibilities

Hue University measured student satisfaction with The development and fulfilling civic

responsibilities with five criteria: he/she masters the knowledge, professional, career skills, and cultivates morality according to self-needs; he/she made much progress in self-study, self-research, etc.; he/she can resolve academic and practical issues; he/she has the communication skills, working teams, adapting the changing labor markets; he/she fulfills responsibilities with family, economy, culture and society of citizens, and respecting human rights.

The survey results in Table 9 showed that, among the five items of the satisfaction scores with The development and fulfilling civic responsibilities, the indicator that the highest point was He/She fulfilling responsibilities with family, economy, culture and society of citizens, and respecting human rights ($M = 4.14$, $SD = .69$) followed by the factor of He/She having the communication skills, working teams, adapting the changing labor markets ($M = 3.73$, $SD = .77$);

Table 8: The satisfaction scores with educational activities

	<i>Level</i>					<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>		
Effectiveness and quality of credit-based training program	.92	4.88	33.24	46.33	14.63	3.69	.81
Lecturers concentrate on developing student's self-study, self-research, creative thinking, practical skills, etc.	.44	3.85	33.24	47.22	15.24	3.73	.78
The forms and methods of evaluating students' learning results are diverse and objective	.41	2.93	35.46	48.65	12.55	3.70	.74
Organizing various careers education (providing information, career opportunities, and seminars with employers, etc.)	.38	3.31	30.86	45.24	20.22	3.82	.80
Total						3.73	.62

M: Mean; SD: Standard deviation

Table 9: The satisfaction scores with the development and fulfilling civic responsibilities

	<i>Level</i>					<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>		
He/She masters the knowledge, professional, career skills, and cultivates morality according to self-needs	.20	2.42	37.13	48.69	11.56	3.69	.71
He/She makes much progress in self-study, self-research, etc.	.27	3.38	37.91	46.85	11.59	3.66	.74
He/She has the ability to resolve academic and practical issues	.24	3.20	39.38	46.03	11.15	3.65	.73
He/She has the communication skills, working teams, adapting the changing labor markets	.41	3.68	32.87	48.55	14.49	3.73	.77
He/She fulfills responsibilities with family, economy, culture and society of citizens and respecting human rights	.14	.34	15.82	52.98	30.72	4.14	.69
Total						3.77	.57

M: Mean; SD: Standard deviation

The item of He/She mastering the knowledge, professional and career skills, and cultivating morality according to self-needs ($M = 3.69$, $SD = .71$); the factor of He/She making much progress in self-study, self-research, etc. ($M = 3.66$, $SD = .74$); and the lowest point was the factor that He/She has the ability to resolve academic and practical issues ($M = 3.65$, $SD = .73$).

B. The Field Satisfaction Scores by Gender

The results of Independent - Samples t-test in Table 10 indicated that there were no significant differences exist between gender in student satisfaction. However, the field of Facili-

ties, Teaching Equipment with more female students ($M = 3.57$, $SD = .66$) than male students ($M = 3.47$, $SD = .69$), $t(2117) = 3.71$, $p < .001$ and Access to Education Services with female students ($M = 3.94$, $SD = .57$) than male students ($M = 3.87$, $SD = .61$), $t(2117) = 2.75$, $p < .001$:

Of the 2,933 students participating in the survey at Hue University from four member universities, just 3.4 percent were fifth-year students, and 1.1 percent were sixth-year students (University of Medicine and Pharmacy). To ensure a standard correlation coefficient across Hue University, we only compare freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior field satisfaction scores on the ground. Table 11 shows that students in

Table 10: The field satisfaction scores by gender

	<i>Male</i>		<i>Female</i>		<i>t(2117)</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Access to education services	3.87	0.61	3.94	0.57	2.75***
Facilities, teaching equipment	3.47	0.69	3.57	0.66	3.71***
Educational environment	3.90	0.60	3.93	0.56	1.15
Educational activities	3.71	0.64	3.74	0.61	1.04
The development and fulfilling civic responsibilities	3.79	0.60	3.77	0.55	1.11

M: Mean; SD: Standard deviation; *** $p < .001$

Table 11: The field satisfaction scores by school year

	<i>M</i>			
	<i>Freshman</i>	<i>Sophomore</i>	<i>Junior</i>	<i>Senior</i>
Access to education services	3.95	3.96	3.92	3.91
Facilities, teaching equipment	3.74	3.56	3.53	3.51
Environmental education	3.97	3.91	3.93	3.94
Educational activities	3.81	3.75	3.75	3.72
The development and fulfilling civic responsibilities	3.76	3.79	3.80	3.80

four higher education institutions from freshman to senior are typically satisfied with Hue University's education services ($3.4 \leq M < 4.2$).

DISCUSSION

This research examined Vietnamese students' perception of service quality and to evaluate scientifically and objectively the quality of offered services of four HEIs belonging to Hue University, Vietnam. Based on the findings of this study, the majority of students are satisfied with the service quality being provided. The students field satisfaction scores with the highest scores were access to educational services and educational environment, and the lowest score included facilities and teaching equipment. According to gender, the field satisfaction scores of students found no differences between males and females. The findings are consistent with the previous study for Vietnamese students (Bui et al. 2016; Hoang et al. 2018; Nguyen 2013; Nguyen et al. 2020; Truong et al. 2016). The t-test was performed on independent samples. The results show the difference in the evaluation of five the quality of higher education service between students of different levels in the five dimensions; sophomores seem to have a lower assessment of the field satisfaction scores than freshmen, juniors, and seniors.

The fact that one of the significant aspects which influences student satisfaction with a university is financial such as tuition costs and supporting assistance. Tuition fee costs and supporting assistance have a significant impact on student satisfaction and this supported the study by Postema and Markham (2018). There was a positive and close relationship between student satisfaction and supporting assistance and tuition costs. Therefore, having suitable supporting assistance and tuition fee costs encourages students to choose a particular university among multiple options. Besides, our results further support a prior study made by Truong et al. (2016) that the students do not feel satisfied with the facilities.

This study reported that the perception of the students about the library substantially affecting student satisfaction with university facilities. This is not consistent with prior researches that have concluded that library experiences

do not contribute to enhanced student satisfaction (DeShields et al. 2015).

There are several suggestions for enhancing the quality of education service at Hue University: Firstly, Hue University support staff should be trained in service quality-related programs such as customer service, general knowledge, inter-personal communication; Secondly, effective feedback mechanisms should be improved to determine whether or not there is a need for improvement in the quality of education services as well as responsibilities of Hue University staff to solve students' problems; Thirdly, effective technical and program improvements need to be made to support all Hue University services, including being student-friendly and gaining student trust and confidence of students; Fourthly, suitable tuition fees, scholarships, and assistance to encourage students to study; Fifthly, facilities, teaching equipment like classrooms, lecture halls, libraries, and entertainment facilities need to be improved so that students feel comfortable using these facilities for better studying and research. Sixthly, teaching staff must understand the above-mentioned difficulties that students face to provide prompt support to their students.

There are several limitations to this study. The main limitation derives from the sampling process used. The study was conducted in 4 universities of Hue University in Vietnam. Participant randomization greatly decreases this concern but does not fully resolve this shortcoming. The second limitation relates to the sampling and self-reported measurements. This could also lead to biases in the findings, and this was cross-sectional research that does not permit reliable results. It is expected that future studies will take those limitations into account.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to find out the factors influencing students' satisfaction toward the quality of education services offered by four university members of Hue University, Vietnam. The study analyzed the actual situation of Hue University's facilities and education services and discovered factors that influence 'students' satisfaction with the education services. Analysis of data gathered from a questionnaire survey

indicated that five dimensions of service quality (access to education services, facilities, teaching equipment; environmental education; educational activities; and the development and fulfilling civic responsibilities) have an influential relationship with student satisfaction. The findings of this study show that the students at Hue University have the most satisfaction with access to education services and environmental education and the lowest satisfaction with facilities and teaching equipment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A number of recommendations can be drawn from this research results. First, the study results have helped to provide essential recommendations and foundations in developing solutions to improve the quality of education service provided by the four universities of Hue University in Vietnam, and to improve the satisfaction of students at Hue University, in a particular case. Furthermore, in the broader contexts of Vietnamese higher education institutions, this research's results will provide critical considerations and implications for different levels of leaders to find measures to enhance the education service quality for attracting and retaining more students. Future research should focus more on a broader sample of participants for a better generalisation and perspectives of participants from a more detailed interview.

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