

AN ANALYSIS OF STUDENT SATISFACTION WITH EDUCATIONAL SERVICES AT UNIVERSITAS TERBUKA: A STUDY ON DISTANCE-LEARNING SUPPORT SERVICES AT UPBJJ UT MAKASSAR

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Abstract

Learning assistance is of utmost importance to distance-education systems in higher education institutions. At Universitas Terbuka, learning assistance schemes are provided by Learning Assistance Center at the head office of Universitas Terbuka and are further administered by the sub-units of learning assistance at UPBJJ (Distance Learning Program Unit, which serves as Universitas Terbuka's unit on regional levels). One of the core functions of the sub-units is to provide distance-learning support compulsory for new students. The compulsory support includes New-Student Orientation, Distance-Learning Training, Assignment Workshop, and Exam Clinic. The present study delves into student satisfaction with the learning support particularly Distance-Learning Training, Assignment Workshop and Exam Clinic. The study is designed in an ex post facto research with a descriptive quantitative approach. Data is collected using a modified Likert-scale questionnaire. The assessment of student satisfaction looks into the instructors, the lesson materials, and the facilitators. Respondents comprise the entire students who attend Distance-Learning Support Service across the regions within which UPBJJ UT Makassar holds administration. Data collection is carried out in the last session of each of the learning support programs and is distributed both online and offline. In average, the results of descriptive statistical analysis on student satisfaction with the learning support programs based on the three aspects of assessment are greater than 3,5, culminating to a very good category. This current finding indicates that UPBJJ UT Makassar has thrived a successful distance-learning trajectory in terms of its learning support schemes. In the long run, the study suggests that UPBJJ UT Makassar ensures appropriate control and evaluation to maintain and improve its benchmarks of quality and excellence in distance-education landscapes.

Keywords: service, quality, orientation, student

1 INTRODUCTION

Following its establishment in 1984 as an early pioneer of distance education in Indonesia, Universitas Terbuka marks its 38th anniversary to reflect on its wide-ranging experiences in distance-education administrations including student recruitment, learning support services, and alumni and learning evaluation. Learning support services remain the most pivotal among others. Higher educations that implement distance education must bring out resources, strategies and practices to support students' academic trajectories, both individually and in group, as a complement to learning-material services. The fundamentals of learning support services lie on three tenets, i.e., cognitive, affective and systematic (Tait, 2000).

Learning support services of Universitas Terbuka are provided by the Coordinators of Learning-Material Assistance, whose major task is to set up and conduct a range of academic practices from the first stage in the preparation to the stage of implementation. It also provides student welcome service called LPKBJJ that stands for Layanan Pendukung Kesuksesan Belajar Jarak Jauh (Distance-Learning Support Service), which includes Orientasi Studi Mahasiswa Baru–OSMB (Student Orientation), Pelatihan Kegiatan Belajar Jarak Jauh–PKBJJ (Distance-Learning Activity

Training), Workshop Tugas–WT (Assignment Workshop) and Klinik Ujian–KU (Exam Clinic). Universitas Terbuka initially had OSMB as the only part of the student welcome services. Since 2019, it has expanded its offerings and embraced a more comprehensive array of activities for its official welcome programs. These programs seek to equip students with a substantial ability that enables them to demonstrate a sense of competence and preparedness for committing to a range of academic processes in a distance-learning trajectory through which they accomplish academic goals at Universitas Terbuka. During LPKBJJ, students are provided with key insights into the conception of distance education and educational system at Universitas Terbuka, learning skills that nurture academic success, and a variety of educational services both offline and online. For many students, LPKBJJ is also their first opportunity to connect with the campus and to learn their way around their study including guiding them to the ability of problem solving without other's help (Universitas Terbuka, 2019). Soria et al. (2019) concur with the sentiment; student welcome services are particularly essential when it comes to navigating students toward social identity in a higher-education institution and promoting a sense of belonging in the university so as to foster academic performance, and in turn student retention.

During 2021-2022 academic year, LKPBJJ at UPBJJ UT Makassar is carried out both online and offline, depending on the students' preference, distance of residence, and the status of COVID-19 outbreak. Universitas Terbuka makes LKPBJJ for all first-year students mandatory. However, it is advisable for current students struggling with course assignments, access to learning applications, practicum sessions and other difficulties in learning experiences to re-engage in LKPBJJ in order to assist the students to the fullest by preparing them well.

LKPBJJ is carried out in accordance with the guidelines of Learning Assistance Center of Universitas Terbuka. To ensure whether objectives or goals being established are achieved, each activity of LPKBJJ is evaluated by the facilitators. Within that standpoint, the present article looks into student satisfaction with the learning support services particularly Distance-Learning Training (PKBJJ), Assignment Workshop and Exam Clinic at UPBJJ UT Makassar.

2 METHODOLOGY

The population of the study comprises the entire students engaging in the three activities of LPKBJJ, i.e., PKBJJ (Distance-Learning Activity Training), Workshop Tugas–WT (Assignment Workshop) and Klinik Ujian–KU (Exam Clinic), at UPBJJ UT Makassar in the registration term 2022.2. The required samples are determined using simple random sampling. The instrument of data collection is a standard questionnaire compiled by the Learning Assistance Center of Universitas Terbuka. The questionnaire uses a modified Likert scale in a 4-point scale (from 1= fair to 4= very good).

Questionnaires are distributed to the entire participants of OSMB (New-Student Orientation) and LPKBJJ UT Makassar both online and offline (hardcopy mode). While hardcopy questionnaires are distributed to the participants of LPKBJJ, online questionnaires using Google form at <https://sl.ut.ac.id/DaftarHadirOSMB80Sep22/> are distributed to those of New-Student Orientation. Both are distributed at the end of programs. The number of questionnaires returned by LPKBJJ and OSMB participants are 850 and 888, respectively. Difference in return rates is subject to difference in time of the programs.

Data analysis fits in a descriptive analysis by calculating the mean, median, and mode in SPSS 20. The results are presented in tables. The criteria that constitute student satisfaction is based on the mean of calculation of each instrument item: 0 – 1,5 = very poor, 1,6 – 2,5 = poor, 2,6 – 3,5 = good, dan 3,6 – 4,0 = excellent (Riduan & Akdon, 2013).

3 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 New-Student Orientation (OSMB)

The New-Student Orientation (OSMB) of Universitas Terbuka in 2022.2 Enrolment (Odd Semester 2022/2023) engages 1.625 incoming students who come from 24 regencies/ cities in South Sulawesi and 70 regencies/ cities across other provinces in Indonesia.

Table 1 Distribution of Incoming Students at UPBJJ UT Makassar in 2022.2 Enrolment

| No | Regency/ City | Number of Students (2022-2) |
|----|-------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 | Selayar Islands Regency | 55 |
| 2 | Bulukumba Regency | 62 |
| 3 | Bantaeng Regency | 22 |
| 4 | Jeneponto Regency | 37 |
| 5 | Takalar Regency | 33 |
| 6 | Gowa Regency | 120 |
| 7 | Sinjai Regency | 16 |
| 8 | Bone Regency | 56 |
| 9 | Maros Regency | 120 |
| 10 | Pangkajene Islands Regency | 91 |
| 11 | Barru Regency | 29 |
| 12 | Soppeng Regency | 22 |
| 13 | Wajo Regency | 41 |
| 14 | Sidenreng Rappang Regency | 45 |
| 15 | Pinrang Regency | 34 |
| 16 | Enrekang Regency | 30 |
| 17 | East Luwu Regency | 113 |
| 18 | Luwu Regency | 35 |
| 19 | Tana Toraja Regency | 73 |
| 20 | North Toraja Regency | 25 |
| 21 | Makassar City | 374 |
| 22 | Pare Pare City | 30 |
| 23 | Palopo City | 22 |
| 24 | North Luwu Regency | 29 |
| 25 | Regions outside South Sulawesi (70 Regencies/ Cities) | 111 |
| | Total | 1,625 |

OSMB is carried out online in a Zoom meeting. 1.625 incoming students are grouped into 5 virtual classes that are integrated in Teams. Microsoft Office 365. Each session is conducted for 10 hours starting from 08.00 to 17.00 WITA. The whole activities of OSMB are held from 17 to 21 September 2022.

The analysis results in SPSS from 888 respondents are presented in Table 2, Table 3, and Table 4 below.

1. Instructor

In Table 2, the aspect of instructor accounts for 5 items, with means ranging between 3,57 and 3,76.

Table 2 Analysis Results of Student Perception of New-Student Orientation (OSMB) at UPBJJ UT Makassar in Odd Semester 2022/2023 (2022.2)

| Aspects of Assessment on Instructor | N | Mean | Mode | Std. Deviation | Sum |
|-------------------------------------|-----|--------|------|----------------|------|
| A. Subject Mastery | 888 | 3.7646 | 4.00 | 0.4840 | 3343 |
| B. Delivery Mode | 888 | 3.7297 | 4.00 | 0.50826 | 3312 |
| C. Interaction with Participants | 888 | 3.6509 | 4.00 | 0.55557 | 3242 |
| D. Responsiveness to Questions | 888 | 3.5676 | 4.00 | 0.61725 | 3168 |
| E. Appearance | 888 | 3.7106 | 4.00 | 0.52084 | 3295 |

The achievement of OSMB is measured by how an instructor masters subject materials, delivers them, interacts with participants, and responds to participants' questions. In Table 2, the highest mean is $3,7646 \pm 0,484$ for Subject Mastery, while the lowest mean is $3,5676 \pm 0,6172$ for Responsiveness to Questions. These four abilities are closely related to the core competence of an instructor. Competence encompasses an underlying characteristic based on one's intellectuality and attitudes to demonstrate superior, long-lasting (stable), and effective performance in one's field of work (Eliza). As such, instructor's high-level competence is mandatory for the success and effectiveness of OSMB at Universitas Terbuka.

2. Materials of OSMB

Materials presented in OSMB of UPBJJ UT Makassar include Introduction to Higher Education System and Distance and Open Education, Four Pillars of Nationality, Learning Guidelines at Universitas Terbuka and Becoming a SMART Student, Introduction to Practicum Courses, Registration and Exam, Introduction to Student Activity and the Policy of MBKM (Freedom of Learning-Independent Campus), Library Service and Information Center, and How to Best Learn and Develop Learning Motivation in a Higher-Education Institution. Analysis of student perception is based on 3 aspects, i.e., attractiveness, usefulness and relevance of materials with student activities. Of 888 respondents, results show that student perception ranges between 3,67

and 3,77. The materials of OSMB are fundamentally subject to the three aspects to set a path of achieving its desirable goals. These goals are principally about empowering students to: 1) learn their way around the environment of UPBJJ UT Makassar, including Universitas Terbuka as a whole, as an academic ecosystem and its existing mechanisms: 2) get insights into how to leverage academic infrastructure to the fullest: 3) obtain pre-knowledge of the discourse of nationality and education that underlies human values: 4) set out an independent-learning trajectory and comply with the existing norms most notably students' code of conduct: 5) nurture a sense of belonging and togetherness in the academic community in order to create a comfortable, orderly and dynamic environment: and 6) foster awareness of academic and social responsibilities according to the Three Pillars of Higher Education (Tridarma).

The current finding is consistently similar to Arhin & Wang'eri's finding (2018) that orientation considerably governs students' behavioral changes during academic transition to higher education. Orientation is further considered as part of strategic and comprehensive schemes for student retention. As Nyar (2020) puts it, student orientation is a key element to student retention and hence should be conducted in a structured manner. It is also important to note that the process of instructor-participant interactions serves an essential role in both learning and training achievement (Nugraheni, Zuhairi, Sajati, Hardini, & Isman, 2012).

Table 3. Student Perception of the Materials of New-Student Orientation (OSMB) at UPBJJ UT Makassar 2022-2

| Aspects of Assessment | | N | Mean | Mode | Std. Deviation | Sum |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----|--------|------|----------------|------|
| 1. Introduction to Higher Education System and Distance and Open Education | a). Attractiveness | 888 | 3.7354 | 4.00 | 0.48519 | 3317 |
| | b). Usefulness | 888 | 3.7489 | 4.00 | 0.47839 | 3329 |
| | c). Relevance to student activities | 888 | 3.6971 | 4.00 | 0.50645 | 3283 |
| 2. Four Pillars of Nationality | a). Attractiveness | 888 | 3.7230 | 4.00 | 0.49101 | 3306 |
| | b). Usefulness | 888 | 3.7500 | 4.00 | 0.48715 | 3330 |
| | c). Relevance to student activities | 888 | 3.6959 | 4.00 | 0.52223 | 3282 |
| 3. Learning Guidelines at Universitas Terbuka and Becoming a SMART Student | a). Attractiveness | 888 | 3.7399 | 4.00 | 0.48531 | 3321 |
| | b). Usefulness | 888 | 3.7748 | 4.00 | 0.47122 | 3352 |
| | c). Relevance to student activities | 888 | 3.7286 | 4.00 | 0.50207 | 3311 |

| Aspects of Assessment | | N | Mean | Mode | Std. Deviation | Sum |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----|--------|------|----------------|------|
| 4. Introduction to Practicum Courses | a). Attractiveness | 888 | 3.6971 | 4.00 | 0.52180 | 3283 |
| | b). Usefulness | 888 | 3.7218 | 4.00 | 0.51175 | 3305 |
| | c). Relevance to student activities | 888 | 3.6903 | 4.00 | 0.52859 | 3277 |
| 5. Registration and Exam | a). Attractiveness | 888 | 3.7050 | 4.00 | 0.50331 | 3290 |
| | b). Usefulness | 888 | 3.7241 | 4.00 | 0.49279 | 3307 |
| | c). Relevance to student activities | 888 | 3.6982 | 4.00 | 0.51045 | 3284 |
| 6. Introduction to Student Activity and the Policy of MBKM (Freedom of Learning-Independent Campus) | a). Attractiveness | 888 | 3.6948 | 4.00 | 0.50733 | 3281 |
| | b). Usefulness | 888 | 3.7072 | 4.00 | 0.49788 | 3292 |
| | c). Relevance to student activities | 888 | 3.6926 | 4.00 | 0.51040 | 3279 |
| 7. Library Service and Information Center | a). Attractiveness | 888 | 3.6712 | 4.00 | 0.53088 | 3260 |
| | b). Usefulness | 888 | 3.7095 | 4.00 | 0.50593 | 3294 |
| | c). Relevance to student activities | 888 | 3.6779 | 4.00 | 0.51569 | 3266 |
| 8. How to Best Learn and Develop Learning Motivation in a Higher-Education Institution | a). Attractiveness | 888 | 3.7399 | 4.00 | 0.48762 | 3321 |
| | b). Usefulness | 888 | 3.7523 | 4.00 | 0.47662 | 3332 |
| | c). Relevance to student activities | 888 | 3.7230 | 4.00 | 0.48871 | 3306 |

3. Quality of Implementation

Student assessment on the quality of OSMB implementation is subject to 5 aspects, i.e., conforming to the implementation schedule, teaching aids used by the instructor, the quality of implementation, and the attitudes of the committee and instructor. The mean for the quality of OSMB implementation ranges between 2.23 and 3,72, with the attitudes of the committee and instructor being the lowest and conforming to the implementation schedule being the highest as Table 4 shows below.

Table 4. Student Perception of the Quality of New-Student Orientation Implementation at UPBJJ UT Makassar 2022.2

| Aspect of Assessment | N | Mean | Mode | Std. Deviation | Sum |
|---------------------------------------|-----|--------|------|----------------|------|
| 1. Conforming to schedules | 888 | 3.7173 | 4.00 | 0.51805 | 3301 |
| 2. Teaching aids | 888 | 3.6340 | 4.00 | 0.55585 | 3227 |
| 3. Implementation quality | 888 | 3.5642 | 4.00 | 0.59908 | 3165 |
| 4. Committee and instructor attitudes | 888 | 2.2309 | 1.00 | 1.28896 | 1981 |

The overall student perception of the quality of OSMB implementation fits into a good and very good category, with the only exception of the attitudes of the committee and instructor. The considerable lack of committee's and instructor's attitudes leaves plenty of room for improvement of OSMB implementation.

3.2 Distance-Learning Skill Training (PKBJJ)

3.2.1 Instructor

As part of student welcome programs, PKBJJ is mandatory for incoming students. Current students are advisable to engage in PKBJJ to update their knowledge and skills for acculturating to the academic trajectories at Universitas Terbuka. PKBJJ is carried out offline throughout 26 classes incorporated with a virtual class at Learning Management System (LMS) of Universitas Terbuka. Face-to-face class focuses on imparting subject materials directly to participants, while virtual class at LMS encourages participants to answer quizzes, which is mandatory for certification requirement. The certification is an official document attesting to participant's achievement of distance-learning skills.

Table 5 Descriptive Statistical Results of the Evaluation on Distance-Learning Skill Training (PKBJJ) at UPBJJ UT Makassar

| | A.1 | B.1 | C.1 | D.1 | E.1 | A.2 | B.2 | C.2 | D. 2 | E.2 |
|----------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| N | 850 | 850 | 850 | 850 | 850 | 850 | 850 | 850 | 850 | 850 |
| Mean | 3.81 | 3.75 | 3.76 | 3.73 | 3.76 | 3.81 | 3.72 | 3.73 | 3.74 | 3.77 |
| Mode | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| Std. Deviation | 0.414 | 0.451 | 0.449 | 0.484 | 0.440 | 0.406 | 0.477 | 0.478 | 0.459 | 0.441 |
| Sum | 3236 | 3191 | 3197 | 3171 | 3197 | 3119 | 3119 | 3171 | 3166 | 3198 |

Description: A = Subject Mastery; B = Subject Delivery; C = Interaction with Participants; D = Responsiveness to Participants' Questions; E = Appearance; 1 = Resource Person 1; 2 = Resource Person 2

PKBJJ is carried out on 24 and 25 September 2022 throughout 19 locations, i.e., East Luwu Regency (Malili), East Luwu (Tomoni), Palopo City, Tana Toraja Regency, Enrekang Regency, Pinrang Regency, Sidrap Regency, Wajo Regency, Parepare City, Barru Regency, Pangkep Regency, Maros Regency, Makassar City 1, Makassar City 2, Gowa Regency, Jenepono Regency, Bulukumba Regency, Bone Regency and Selayar Islands Regency. As for the students from outside the province of South Sulawesi, PKBJJ is held in November 2022. Evaluation on the instructor of PKBJJ from 850 respondents is presented in Table 5.

3.2.2 Materials

The analysis results of 803 responses that fit in SPSS 20 are presented in Table 6. The overall rate of student perception of the implementation of PKBJJ at UPBJJ UT Makassar in 2022.2 is 3,5. This finding indicates that the activities provided at PKBJJ are meaningful, useful, and relevant to the student activities at Universitas Terbuka.

Table 6. Student Perception of the Materials Presented in the Distance-Learning Skill Training (PKBJJ) at UPBJJ UT Makassar 2022.2.

| Aspects of Assessment | | N | Mean | Std. Dev | Sum |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----|------|----------|---------|
| Academic Integrity | a). Attractiveness | 803 | 3.68 | 0.48 | 2958.00 |
| | b). Usefulness | 803 | 3.77 | 0.44 | 3027.00 |
| | c). Relevance to Student Activities | 803 | 3.67 | 0.49 | 2948.00 |
| Online Tutoring Discussion and Assignment | a). Attractiveness | 803 | 3.68 | 0.49 | 2958.00 |
| | b). Usefulness | 803 | 3.71 | 0.47 | 2978.00 |
| | c). Relevance to Student Activities | 803 | 3.69 | 0.48 | 2961.00 |
| Participation and Assignment of Face-to-Face Tutoring or Web Tutoring | a). Attractiveness | 802 | 3.65 | 0.51 | 2925.00 |
| | b). Usefulness | 803 | 3.69 | 0.48 | 2960.00 |
| | c). Relevance to Student Activities | 803 | 3.62 | 0.51 | 2907.00 |
| Course Assignment | a). Attractiveness | 803 | 3.61 | 0.54 | 2896.00 |
| | b). Usefulness | 803 | 3.62 | 0.51 | 2908.00 |
| | c). Relevance to Student Activities | 803 | 3.58 | 0.54 | 2875.00 |
| Practice and Practicum | a). Attractiveness | 803 | 3.69 | 0.49 | 2962.00 |
| | b). Usefulness | 803 | 3.73 | 0.46 | 2994.00 |
| | c). Relevance to Student Activities | 803 | 3.67 | 0.51 | 2943.00 |
| Research Work | a). Attractiveness | 803 | 3.72 | 0.47 | 2985.00 |
| | b). Usefulness | 803 | 3.74 | 0.45 | 3000.00 |
| | c). Relevance to Student Activities | 803 | 3.70 | 0.49 | 2970.00 |
| Materials for Student Performance | a). Attractiveness | 803 | 3.66 | 0.51 | 2941.00 |
| | b). Usefulness | 803 | 3.69 | 0.49 | 2964.00 |
| | c). Relevance to Student Activities | 803 | 3.66 | 0.51 | 2935.00 |

3.2.3 Quality of Implementation

The quality of PKBJJ at UPBJJ UT Makassar based on student evaluation is presented in Table 7, which stands at >3,5, indicating quality excellence in the implementation. Quality excellence is also noticeable in the implementation schedule, location, and food and beverage. Committee's attitudes and teaching aids, however, range between 3,0 and 3,5 (<3,5), suggesting the importance of continuous improvement within UPBJJ UT Makassar.

Table 7. Student Perception of the Quality of Distance-Learning Skill Training (PKBJJ) Implementation at UPBJJ UT Makassar 2022.2

| Aspect of Assessment | N | Mean | Median | Std. Dev. | Sum |
|---------------------------|-----|------|--------|-----------|---------|
| Schedule | 850 | 3.66 | 4.00 | 0.51 | 3115.00 |
| Teaching aids | 850 | 3.38 | 3.00 | 0.70 | 2872.00 |
| Quality of Implementation | 850 | 3.49 | 4.00 | 0.61 | 2966.00 |
| Committee's attitudes | 850 | 3.27 | 3.00 | 0.82 | 2777.00 |
| Location | 850 | 3.86 | 4.00 | 0.35 | 3282.00 |
| Food and beverage | 850 | 3.86 | 4.00 | 0.38 | 3284.00 |

The lack of quality of teaching aids is presumably due to poor Internet connection in particular locations, which eventually impedes online training. As many regular trainings at schools or educational agencies that do not have their own Wi-Fi network, poor Internet connection raises concerns around the access to online training in PKBJJ. Topping it all off, PKBJJ suffers from the lack of number of committees who at the same time serve as instructors, which results in non-optimal services for participants. It is, therefore, highly advisable that the coordinators of PokJar (Study Groups) and SALUT (UT Service Center) be engaged in the training to stick with the planning workflow and achieve the desirable milestones.

The overall excellent rate of student assessment on the implementation of OSMB and PKBJJ is predictably obvious given that the participants find the materials provided in both programs new and interesting, particularly concerning the details of higher education and distance learning. They also have the opportunity to get insights into the differences in the types of higher education, a myriad of educational facilities provided at Universitas Terbuka and how to leverage them, effective learning strategies, types of learning service modes, how to create and navigate an online account, and examination-related information. This finding corroborates Watt's (2019) finding that defines the benefits of student orientation in assisting student to prepare learning experience, to understand the terminologies associated with learning processes, and to interact with peers.

4 CONCLUSION

This recent study has provided a comprehensive understanding on student satisfaction with educational services at UPBJJ UT Makassar. Current findings reveal that student perception of OSMB and PKBJJ ranges between 3,5 and 4.0, indicating quality excellence in the implementation. Items that score less than 3,5 are worth noting and improving to enhance Universitas Terbuka's all-inclusive milestones of quality and excellence in distance-education landscapes.

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