

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAM IN OPEN AND DISTANCE EDUCATION LEARNING

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Abstract

Universitas Terbuka (UT) is a university that implements open and distance learning (ODL) that reaches students from all over Indonesia and abroad. As a university that has an extraordinary mandate from the government to provide affordable higher education for all Indonesians, UT organizes various educational programs, including continuing education program. Continuing education program is a non-degree program offered to a wider community who want to improve their professional skills. It is developed in accordance with the real needs of national development. To improve UT's continuing education program, it is necessary to evaluate the program. This study aims to analyse the characteristics and processes of managing the continuing education program at UT and to evaluate the certificate program at UT. This study was designed as mixed methods research that combines quantitative and qualitative data to draw conclusions. A quantitative survey was conducted on participants and graduates, lecturers, and staff at regional offices. Meanwhile, interviews were conducted with several officials related to the continuing education program. The quantitative survey succeeded in obtaining data from 131 participants with questions divided into motivation to participate in the program, application of information technology systems, public relations models, interaction, learning achievement, and evaluation. In addition, a survey was also conducted on continuing education program organizers and lecturers with questions covering the application of information technology systems, resources, public relations models, interaction, learning achievement, and evaluation. One important result of this study showed that motivation of participants in participating this program are because they feel this program is important, there is internal encouragement, and they believe that this program is useful and are committed to showing the best performance. Other results also showed that in general, the participants felt satisfied with the program. In terms of program implementation, several improvements are needed including policies, information technology, public relations, resources, follow-up, evaluation and satisfaction. As for lecturers, they need to be involved in policy formulation so they can play a role and give positive input in the development and implementation of the programs.

Keywords: continuing education program, distance education, mixed method, program evaluation.

1 INTRODUCTION

The dynamics of national development demands human resources who have the ability to carry out their duties and functions properly. Every organization needs good quality of human resources and it can be fulfilled through education or trainings. To facilitate those needs, UT is developing a Certificate Program called Continuing Education Program or Program Pendidikan Berkelanjutan (PPB). Continuing Education Program is designed in a modul program which consists of several teaching materials. Continuing Education Program provided by UT are as follows: Village Government Leadership (Program Kepemimpinan Pemerintahan Desa/PKPD), Village Government administration Program (Program Penyelenggaraan Pemerintahan Desa/P3D), and Early childhood educators Certificate Program (Program Sertifikat Guru Pendamping Muda PAUD atau PS-GPM PAUD).

Village Government Leadership or PKPD and Government administration Program or P3D is designed for the village staff administration. By conducting workshop or guided trainings, this program provides some village administration staffs to have the ability in managing village

government professionally. Young Assistant Teacher Certificate Program or PS-GPM PAUD is designed for young teachers at kindergarten (Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini) who does not have educational background in Education for Early Childhood, but they are needed by the school and community in their surroundings.

By the year 2020-2021, this Continuing Education Program has been reconstructed in order to accommodate the government policy which focuses on the enhancement of good quality of human resources so that UT needs to manage the Continuing Education Program. Some points to be managed are analyzing the community needs, curriculum adjustment, improving the modul of Continuing Education Program, and the operational guidelines. The curriculum of Continuing Education Program has been developed based on the needs analysis for developing and improving the human resources in formal education and nonformal education, and also in managing the village government.

This article will analyze the characteristics and the process of managing the certificate program at UT and to evaluate the certificate program at UT. The article will focus on motivation to join the program, application of information technology systems, public relations models, interaction, learning achievement, and evaluation from the participants, staff of UT's branch offices and lecturers.

2 METHODOLOGY

The design of this research is mix method (qualitative and quantitative). The purpose of the research is to know the characteristics and the process of Continuing Education Program in UT. The quantitative survey developed towards the participants, graduated students, and the lecturers and staff in regional office. The questionnaires are given to 137 participants: 7 staff of UT's branch offices and 8 lecturers. Meanwhile, the researcher has done some interview about continuing education program with the leader of the university.

3 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Here are the results of questionnaire analysis from the participants, UT's branch offices Staffs, and Lecturers

3.1 Participants

Part 1: Participants' demographic data

Table 1. Ages of Respondents (n=134).

	<i>Ages</i>	<i>Total</i>
1	<i>Below 20 years old</i>	3
2	<i>20 – 30 years old</i>	49
3	<i>31 – 40 years old</i>	50

Table 2. Gender (n=134).

	<i>Ages</i>	<i>Total</i>
1	<i>Male</i>	12
2	<i>Female</i>	122

Table 3. The Purpose of Respondents follow a certificate program.

	<i>Purpose</i>	<i>Amount</i>
1	<i>To get a certificate</i>	5
2	<i>To develop knowledge and professional skills</i>	107
3	<i>To transfer into Undergraduate Program or Diploma diploma</i>	19

Table 4. questionnaire analysis from the participants (n=134).

	<i>Question</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standar Deviation</i>	<i>Description</i>
1	<i>Information Technology System</i>			
	<i>The Information technology systems is effectively responsive to the operation of the non-degree program management</i>	3.92	0.90	High
2	<i>Non-degree Program Public Relations</i>			
	<i>Public relations model of non-degree program can reach the target audience comprehensively and thoroughly.</i>	3.95	0.97	High
3	<i>Application of media and technology</i>			
	<i>The application of media and technology is diverse and responds to the needs of learners.</i>	4.10	0.86	High
4	<i>Teaching and learning management</i>			
	<i>Teaching and learning management promote proper learners-teachers and learner-learner interaction.</i>	4.18	0.80	High
5	<i>Follow-up evaluation</i>			

	<i>Follow-up evaluations of learners are carried out both during and at the end of the program.</i>	4.11	0.87	High
6	Student learning support services			
	<i>The counseling and learning support services are provided to students throughout the non-degree program.</i>	4.14	0.84	High
7	The number of graduated students / students' learning achievement			
	<i>Students' learning achievement is in line with the objectives of the non-degree program.</i>	4.11	0.81	High
8	Satisfaction towards non-degree program management			
	<i>The satisfaction towards the non-degree program management</i>	4.30	0.75	High
9	Benefits of learners			
	<i>Learners gained knowledge, skills and experience according to the set goals.</i>	4.31	0.75	High
	<i>Learners can apply their knowledge, skills, and experience in practice.</i>	4.30	0.74	High

Based on the purpose of the respondents who join the certificate program, there are 81.7% respondent express that the aim of joining the program is developing their knowledge and skills. It implies to the design of continuing education program that should be matched with society needs, especially programs that will support professional skills.

The result of the survey of managing the certificate program showed **High** answers. The questionnaire items are about (1) Information Technology usage; (2) public relation program; (3) teaching-learning program; (4) evaluation; (5) counseling services, and (6) the implementation of skills of the community.

In Information Technology usage, the respondents evaluate that the IT usage in the certificate program is good and being used by the participants effectively and responsively in accordance with the participants needs. In public relations aspect, it is evaluated as good and can reach all communities comprehensively. It fits the spread areas of the UT's services in Indonesia and overseas. The teaching-learning process aspect also get a good evaluation especially in supporting the interaction between the participants, learning achievement based on the aims of the program, getting some knowledge, skills, and experience are fits to the purpose of the certificate program.

In this certificate program, survey gets deepen by asking the respondents about the teaching-learning process related with the certificate program. The survey is divided into eight questions; (1) participants' motivation; (2) *perceived learning*; (3) academic performance; (4) interaction between the participants; (5) interactions between participants and lecturers; (6) participants' involvements; (7) learning structure (8) satisfaction.

The result of the survey showed that the participants' motivation in joining the certificate program because it is very important, mostly comes from their internal motivation, and they are confident that the program will be beneficial so that they have commitment to show their best performance. In each item of the questionnaire, the answer of the respondent is High, it means that the motivation of the participants are high. Another variable is *perceived learning*. Caspi dan Blau (2008) define *perceived learning* as a set of beliefs and feelings that a person has about learning that occur. Therefore, the teaching learning process being experienced is retrospective evaluation from learning experience. *Perceived learning* showed that how students express their feelings about the learning process that has been done. When they experience some interesting and enjoyable experience in learning, so they will be more motivated through online learning. It is different with the learning process in the classroom, online learning urges the students to have high motivation in finishing one subject learning. Since the students and the tutor are in different area, so the *engagement* being made in every person will support the positive perception of learning.

In perceived learning, all respondents gave a high score in each item. It is showed that during the learning process of certificate program, all participants feel a positive experience that helps them to understand the teaching-learning materials so that they also improve their communication skills and other issues related to practice and theory. It is also related to the academic performance of participants which show good level. Most of the participants express their agreements to each item of questionnaire. It is also showed at interaction variable and the *engagement* that showed a positive evaluation.

3.2 Staff of UT's branch offices

Beside the participants of continuing education program, the survey is also given to the staff of UT's branch offices to get some opinions about the managements of certificate program. The questions are about the policy of management of certificate program, Information Technology, human resources, implementation of certificate program, evaluation, satisfaction, and follow-up. The respondents evaluate that the policy of certificate program is clear and can be implemented.

Table 5. Total Respondent of staff UPBJJ.

	UPBJJ	Total
1	Jember	1
2	Bandung	2
3	Makassar	1
4	Denpasar	3
	Total	7

Table 6. Result (n=134).

	Question	Mean	Standard Deviation	Description
1	Institution policies			
	<i>The clarity of the non-degree program management policies</i>	3.71	0.45	High
	<i>The ability to implement the policies</i>	3.71	0.45	High
	<i>The participation of related staff in policy formulation</i>	3.86	0.64	High
2	Organization establishment			
	<i>The appropriateness of organization establishment to be responsible for the non-degree program</i>	3.71	0.45	High
	<i>The appropriateness of job specifications and responsibilities assigned</i>	3.86	0.35	High
3	Information Technology System			
	<i>The Information technology systems is effectively responsive to the operation of the non-degree program management</i>	3.71	0.45	High
4	Infrastructure /Resource System			
	<i>The technological infrastructure is effectively responsive to the operation of the non-degree program management such as</i>	3.86	0.35	High

	<i>learning platforms, the Internet, etc.</i>			
	<i>The effective non-degree program management resources such as budget, materials, etc. are effective.</i>	3.86	0.64	<i>High</i>
5	<i>Need Analysis of the target group</i>			
	<i>The coverage of the needs analysis of the target group</i>	4.14	0.35	<i>High</i>
6	<i>Design of the non-degree programs</i>			
	<i>The appropriateness of approaches used in designing the non-degree program</i>	4.14	0.64	<i>High</i>
7	<i>Non-degree Program Public Relations</i>			
	<i>Public relations model of Non-degree program can reach the target audience comprehensively and thoroughly.</i>	4.00	0.75	<i>High</i>
7	<i>Application of media and technology</i>			
	<i>The application of media and technology is diverse and responds to the needs of learners.</i>	4.00	0.53	<i>High</i>
8	<i>Teaching and learning management</i>			
	<i>Teaching and learning management has achieved the objectives of the non-degree program.</i>	4.28	0.45	<i>High</i>
	<i>Teaching and learning management promote proper learners-teachers and learner-learner interaction.</i>	4.43	0.50	<i>High</i>
9	<i>Follow-up evaluation</i>			

	<i>Follow-up evaluations of non-degree programs are continuingly and appropriately conducted on a regular basis.</i>	4.14	0.64	High
	<i>Follow-up evaluations of learners are carried out both during and at the end of the program.</i>	4.28	0.70	High
10	Student assistance services			
	<i>The counseling and learning support services are provided to students throughout the non-degree program.</i>	4.28	0.45	High
11	Satisfaction towards non-degree program management			
	<i>The satisfaction towards the non-degree program management</i>	4.14	0.64	High
12	The application of the non-degree program management assessment results for further improvement			
	<i>Assessment results are used in the non-degree program management.</i>	4.14	0.64	High

Lecturers

1) The Total of Respondents (Lecturers)

Table 7. Total Respondent of Lecture.

	Lecturers	Total
1	<i>Program Sertifikat Guru Pendamping Muda Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini (PS-GPM PAUD)</i>	4
2	<i>Program Administrasi Pemerintahan Desa (APD)/ Paket Kepemimpinan Desa</i>	3
3	<i>Pengelolaan Keuangan Daerah/desa</i>	1
	Total	8

Table 8. Result (n=134).

	<i>Question</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>Description</i>
1	<i>Institutional Policies</i>			
	<i>The clarity of the non-degree program management policies</i>	3.62	0.70	<i>High</i>
	<i>The ability to implement the policies</i>	3.87	0.60	<i>High</i>
	<i>The participation of related lecturers in policy formulation</i>	3.62	0.48	<i>High</i>
2	<i>Organization establishment</i>			
	<i>The appropriateness of organization establishment to be responsible for the non-degree program</i>	4.25	0.66	<i>High</i>
	<i>The appropriateness of job specifications and responsibilities assigned</i>	4.12	0.60	<i>High</i>
	<i>The adequacy of the responsible person</i>	3.12	1.27	<i>High</i>
	<i>The suitability of the responsible person</i>	3.87	0.60	<i>High</i>
3	<i>Information Technology System</i>			
	<i>The Information technology systems is effectively responsive to the operation of the non-degree program management</i>	4.00	0.50	<i>High</i>
4	<i>Infrastructure /Resource System</i>			
	<i>The technological infrastructure is effectively responsive to the operation of the non-degree program management such as learning platforms, the Internet,</i>	3.87	1.05	<i>High</i>
	<i>The non-degree program management resources such as budget, materials, etc. are effective.</i>	3.87	0.60	<i>High</i>
5	<i>Need Analysis of the target group</i>			
	<i>The coverage of the needs analysis of the target group</i>	3.75	0.66	<i>High</i>

6	Design of the non-degree programs			
	<i>The appropriateness of approaches used in designing the non-degree program</i>	3.87	0.60	High
7	Non-degree Program Public Relations			
	<i>Public relations model of non-degree program can reach the target audience comprehensively and thoroughly.</i>	4.00	0.70	High
8	Application of media and technology			
	<i>The application of media and technology is diverse and responds to the needs of learners.</i>	4.12	0.60	High
9	Teaching and learning management			
	<i>Teaching and learning management have achieved the objectives of the non-degree program.</i>	4.25	0.66	High
	<i>Teaching and learning management promote proper learners-teachers and learner-learner interaction.</i>	4.00	0.50	High
10	Follow-up evaluation			
	<i>Follow-up evaluations of non-degree programs are continuingly and appropriately conducted on a regular basis.</i>	3.75	0.66	High
	<i>Follow-up evaluations of learners are carried out both during and at the end of the program.</i>	3.87	0.60	High
11	Student learning support services			
	<i>The counseling and learning support services are provided to students throughout the non-degree program.</i>	4.12	0.60	High

12	The number of graduated students / Students' learning achievement			
	<i>The number of graduated students meets the target.</i>	4.00	1.00	High
13	Satisfaction towards non-degree program management			
	<i>The satisfaction towards the non-degree program management</i>	4.00	0.71	High
14	The application of the non-degree program management assessment results for further improvement			
	<i>Assessment results are used in the non-degree program management.</i>	4.00	0.50	High

The survey of managing certificate program has been done by some lecturers who are responsible for developing the certificate program, those are preparing the curriculum and teaching materials. Minimum number of lecturers as respondents is caused by the difficulties in tracing the lecturers who developed the certificate program in the previous years. However, the answers from the respondents (Lecturers) can be considered as evaluation materials. The questionnaire for the respondents is about the management policy of certificate program, information technology, human resources, implementation of certificate program, evaluation, satisfaction, and follow-up. Based on the answers and the result of the questionnaire, there are some lecturers who still disagree with the clarity of the policy. It means that certificate program is still not clear enough for the lecturer who developed the program. For the question about the participation of the lecturers in arranging the policy, some lecturers answered "netral". It means that the lecturers are not asked to arrange the policy besides the assignments of developing curriculum and teaching materials needed.

Beside the assignment of developing curriculum and teaching materials needed, the improvement is needed to be done. The lecturers should be involved in arranging the operation of certificate such as developing teaching materials, learning process, and the implementation at staff of UT's branch offices. In general, needs involvement of lecturers in arranging the policy so that they are not only end their activities in developing curriculum and teaching materials, but also need to do some evaluation about the implementation of the program.

4 CONCLUSION

Continuing education program that has been held by UT requires continuous improvement. As a program that supports community professional skills, this program must be developed according to community needs. This is in accordance with one of the results of this study showing that the majority of respondents stated that their goal in joining the continuing education program were to develop professional knowledge and skills. In addition, other results from this study indicate that according to staff at branch offices, continuing education programs have clarity so that they are easy to implement it. From the lecturer's perspective, there are very meaningful inputs, that lecturers should continue to be involved in program implementation so that they can evaluate for improvements in the future. Currently, lecturers are only in charge of developing curriculum and teaching materials, and their activities are completed when the program is implemented. Lastly, the result also show that respondents mark all aspects in continuing education program as high or good aspects.

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