

NEW STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DISTANCE LEARNING SKILLS TRAINING (PKBJJ) UNIVERSITAS TERBUKA MAKASSAR

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Abstract

Long-Distance Learning Skills Training (PKBJJ) intend to preparing the students to posses the ability to read effectively and utilize UT's online service for studying purpose. PKBJJ is a mandatory for all new students from Diploma, Bachelor to Magister. PKBJJ are attended by new students after they participate in the New Student Study Orientation (OSMB) activities. However, if new students do not take part in OSMB and PKBJJ activities according to the schedule set by the UPBJJ-UT, they must take part in these activities at the Learning Clinic based on the schedule prepared by the UPBJJ. Students who take part in PKBJJ thoroughly will receive a training certificate which when they graduate, it will become part of the Diploma Companion Certificate (SKPI). This research aims to make a scientific contribution for long distance learning skills training (PKBJJ) using descriptive variables. To obtain valid data, this study used a questionnaire on new students at the Universitas Terbuka UPBJJ-Makassar for the 2019.2 registration period , there are 328 of them. Respondents for this study were obtained when PKBJJ activities were taking place in several regions, which is: Pangkep-Maros, Sidrap-Pinrang, Bone-Wajo, Tana Toraja-North Toraja, and Luwu Raya. The data processing techniques were implemented on this research are the frequency method, tables, and statistical data. This research succeeded in finding that in the process of long distance learning skills training the following indicators are required: The relevance of activities to needs in the amount of 4. 166 ; b) Implementation of interactive training in the amount of 4,000; c) Respondents' assessment of PKBJJ training materials in the amount of 4,410; d) Respondents' assessment of the instructor's capability in the amount of 4,318; and e) The preperation of all staff from UT in the amount of 4,230; and f) Student responses to facilities and consumption in the amount of 4,395. By using the six PKBJJ indicators, this study showed results that all classified in the good category, but the highest respondents' ratings in that category were on training material which was considered very important to be known by new UT students. So overall the perception of new students who took part in the 2019.2 PKBJJ training at UPBJJ-UT Makassar obtained an average score of $\geq 4,000$ which is classified as very good. The results of implementing PKBJJ and it succeed in run the training and long distance learning skills will have the effect of significantly increasing student interest and learning achievement.

Key Words: distance learning, skills, new students, training, perception

1 INTRODUCTION

Universitas Terbuka (UT) is one of the state tertiary institutions which has the characteristics of providing distance education. The learning process that takes place at UT requires students to study independently, but that does not mean students are left in their own confusion, but UT will equip students so that they can study independently. The services provided by UT aim to help students study independently and manage their learning process by understanding and exploring course material through various modes. Independent learning in many ways is determined by the student's ability to manage time and study effectively. Effective independent learning can only be done if students have self-discipline, initiative, and strong motivation to learn. Independent learning can be done alone or in groups, both in study groups and in tutorial groups. Students are

also required to be able to manage their time efficiently, so they can study regularly based on a self-determined study schedule. Therefore, in order for UT students to achieve optimal results, students must have the ability and skills to study independently. To foster self-discipline, study motivation, and strong skills in students, adequate information and training is needed, one of which is the Distance Learning Skills Training (PKBJJ) held by Universitas Terbuka's Distance Learning Program Unit office (UPBJJ-UT). .

This is reinforced by the circular letter of the Deputy Chancellor for Academic Affairs No. 2762/UN31/PP/2018 dated 16 January 2018 and No. 9656/UN31/PP/2018 dated 28 February 2018, that every UPBJJ-UT is required to organize an EKBM (Student Learning Readiness Education) including PKBM (Independent Learning Skills Training), and new students are required to take part in these activities so that they can have understanding, readiness, and learning resilience that can support their success in studying at UT. However, starting in 2019, ECBM has changed to Student Learning Skills Education which includes 3 activities: (1) New Student Study Orientation (OSMB); (2) Distance Learning Training (PKBJJ); and (3) Learning Clinic. Even in the UT Implementation System, 2022/2023 it is stated that starting in 2018, after participating in the New Student Study Orientation (OSMB) activities, new students are required to take part in PKBJJ. For new students who do not take part in OSMB and PKBJJ activities together at the place and time determined by the UPBJJ-UT, they will then reschedule these activities for the following semester or at another time and opportunity. Thus the PKBJJ training for UT students absolutely must be attended by both new and on-going students.

Furthermore, in the UT Implementation System, 2022/2023 it is stated that PKBJJ activities must be attended by all new students both at home and abroad, and new students at the Diploma, Bachelor, Masters and Doctoral levels. PKBJJ aims to equip students with understanding and effective learning skills in the distance education system at UT so that they have readiness, confidence, and independence in completing their studies effectively and with good results. In PKBJJ new UT students are trained to have insight, attitudes, and independent skills in learning starting from how to plan study time, apply effective learning strategies through reading quickly and effectively, and record reading results so as to produce good notes as a result of the recording. In addition, at PKBJJ new students are trained to operate and utilize computers, the internet, and learning resources needed for learning purposes, especially through online learning resources and services provided by UT. This is also conveyed in the Guidelines for the Implementation of Successful Distance Learning Support Services (LPKBJJ), 2021 that PKBJJ equips students with

knowledge, learning experience, and independent study skills which consist of managing study time, implementing reading strategies and recording reading results, utilizing UT services online and various learning resources, as well as tips for success in following Online Tutorials (Tuton).

Based on the results of monitoring/supervision of the implementation of PKBM in 2018, it shows that all UPBJJ-UT have enthusiastically tried and worked hard to be able to carry out PKBM activities properly. Student participants in PKBM generally showed a very positive response. PKBM activities were attended with great enthusiasm and enthusiasm. For them, PKBM is very useful to be able to study well at UT. Not even a few "ongoing" students also want to be invited to take part in the training (Circular of the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, 2019). However, for the results of PKBJJ training for new students at UT-Makassar in the 2019.2 period, it is necessary to evaluate its implementation and capture the perceptions of new students regarding the implementation of PKBJJ at UPBJJ-UT Makassar in the 2019.2 period.

Perception (from the Latin *perceptio*, *percipio*) is the event of compiling, recognizing, and interpreting sensory information so that it can provide an overview and understanding of the environment. According to O'Brien & Daniel, (2014), that perception is a central issue in epistemology (a branch of philosophy about the foundations and limits of knowledge), the theory of knowledge. Meanwhile, according to Mc. Shane, at.al. (2000), that perception is the process of receiving information and understanding of the environment including establishing information to form its categorization and interpretation. The point of perception is related to how a person receives information and adapts to his environment. This means that there is an interpretation in understanding the information that can increase the knowledge that receives it or there is a selection of stimuli captured by the five senses. This will later affect the behavior of each individual who receives the information. In the Big Indonesian Dictionary, perception is a direct response (acceptance) of something, a person's process of knowing several things through his five senses. Based on these opinions, it can be concluded that perception is the process of entering experiences about objects and events in the form of messages or information into the human brain which then forms thinking processes. In addition, the nature of likes and dislikes, likes and dislikes towards an object will give rise to an image in the formation of perception. Because of the responses or perceptions of students who have participated in PKBJJ training in 2019.2, their perceptions need to be captured so that they can find out about the implementation of PKBJJ which has an impact on adding insight in completing their studies at UT in a timely manner.

2 METHODOLOGY

This research is an ex-post facto research, namely research that only reveals existing data without giving treatment to the subjects being conducted (Sugiyono, 2014). In this study, the independent variables cannot be controlled by the researcher because the events have already taken place or these variables basically cannot be manipulated.

This research was conducted in September 2019 in 5 Rayons which included: Pangkep-Maros, Sidrap-Pinrang, Bone-Wajo, Tana Toraja-Toraja Utara, and Luwu Raya. The selection of the location was based on the formation of a rayon representing the working group as the place for the implementation of the PKBJJ at UPBJJ-UT Makassar. The sample for this study was 328 of 1,277 new students for the 2019.2 term who were spread across all districts in UPBJJ-UT Makassar.

The approach used in this research is descriptive quantitative. This research requires quantitative data by distributing questionnaires to PKBJJ participants and then the data is processed quantitatively using non-parametric statistics which are processed by calculating the average using the excel program. The results of the data processing are described using tables and figures.

Data collection was carried out by distributing questionnaires from PKBJJ participants to respondents with several indicator statements, namely: (1) relevance of activities to needs; (2) implementation of PKBJJ training; (3) PKBJJ training materials; (4) instructor's ability; (5) committee readiness; and (6) facilities and consumption.

The data collection technique used in this research is a questionnaire equipped with 5 score answer choices with a weighting of 1 – 5. This is done to avoid the tendency to choose a neutral value (Mulyatiningsih, 2014). The scoring guidelines used in this study can be seen in table 1 below.

Table. 1. Rating Scale Weighting

Choice of Answers	Weight Rating
Very Good (VG)	5
Good (G)	4
Enough (E)	3
Less (L)	2
Very Less (VL)	1

To provide a description of the data in this study, a descriptive analysis test was used. According to Sugiyono (2017) the descriptive analysis test aims to analyze data by describing or describing the collected data as it is, without intending to make general conclusions or generalizations. The descriptive analysis includes the number of subjects in the group, the mean score of the questionnaire, the standard deviation of the questionnaire score, variance, maximum score and minimum score. The level of perception and student satisfaction is determined based on the average score of the questionnaire after categorizing the levels, namely: very good, good, enough, and less.

The average value formula used is:

$$\text{Index (average)} = (\text{Questionnaire Answer Score} : \text{Sample Score})$$

Categorization based on the average score level is determined based on Table 2 below:

Table 2. Interval Average Score Category

Index (Average)	Category
4,0 – 5,0	Very Good
3,0 – 3,9	Good
2,0 – 2,9	Enough
1,0 – 1,9	Less

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Research Result

The results of data processing on the level of perception of new students as many as 382 respondents to the implementation of PKBJJ at UPBJJ-UT Makassar for the 2019.2 period which were processed with the Excel program based on table 2, can be presented as table 3 below.

Table 3. Average Score of the Questionnaire Results

Indicator	Average Score	Category
Relevance of activities to needs	4.166	Very Good
Implementation of interactive training	4.000	Very Good
Respondents' assessment to the PKBJJ training material	4.410	Very Good

Respondents' assessment to the instructor's ability	4.318	Very Good
Committee readiness	4.230	Very Good
Student responses to facilities and consumption	4.395	Very Good

Based on the results of data processing, the average questionnaire score for the level of perception of new students regarding the implementation of PKBJJ at UPBJJ-UT Makassar for the 2019.2 period was all in the very good category regarding the statement indicators: (1) relevance of activities to needs; (2) implementation of PKBJJ training; (3) PKBJJ training materials; (4) instructor's ability; (5) committee readiness; and (6) facilities and consumption. The highest score was obtained on indicator 3 or the statement of PKBJJ training materials with an average score of 4,410, and the lowest score was on the indicator for implementing PKBJJ training with an average score of 4,000.

3.2 Discussion

The results of data processing on the perceptions of new students in the 2019.2 PKBJJ implementation at the Makassar UPBJJ-UT as shown in table 3, it can be seen that the average score for all categories is very good. One of the highest scores submitted by students on the research instrument was in the statement "PKBJJ Training Materials". The development of information and communication technology in the current era has a major influence on the teaching and learning process. Since the existence of internet technology, almost everything has become possible in the world of education, including the implementation of PKBJJ training. Through the internet network in PKBJJ activities, they are trained to operate and utilize computers, the internet, and learning resources needed for learning purposes, especially through online learning resources and services provided by UT. Students immediately practice accessing virtual reading rooms, online smart teacher portals, and activating online tutorials that can connect with other students, as well as with course tutors. This was also conveyed by Brindley, at.al. (2004) that through new technology, in this case the internet network which has a big impact where student support is conceptualized and practiced. Through the internet network, students can directly connect with other students as well as with various other supporters, such as their instructors, librarians, registrars, and academic advisors.

The next highest score is found in the statement item "Respondent's assessment of the instructor's ability". The instructors for the PKBJJ training are lecturers from the UPBJJ-UT who have

attended training and equalized perceptions. One of the requirements in the implementation of PKBJJ, instructors who will deliver training materials must master the material, and have UT insight and can become other academic consultants. This is in accordance with what is stated in the Guidelines for the Implementation of Successful Distance Learning Support Services, 2021 that PKBJJ instructors are lecturers (UT lecturers and UT lecturers outside who are tutors with very good performance) or educators who have attended training and have passed the instructor training. So UT tutors can also become instructors who can facilitate student learning processes, manage learning activities, resource persons who provide facts and empirical evidence in their field of knowledge, and guide students in understanding the material in tutorial activities. According to Akhter and Ali (2016) that tutors are indispensable for the smooth running of distance education programs. Even no institution which has ideal planning, effective study materials, good rankings in distance education institutions can work towards achieving its goals without having dedicated, qualified and trained tutors.

4 CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research on the perceptions of new students regarding the implementation of PKBJJ as many as 328 people against 6 instrument questionnaire items which were processed with the excel program at UPBJJ-UT Makassar during the 2019.2 registration period, the average results were obtained in the very good category. So overall the perception of new students who took part in the 2019.2 PKBJJ training at UPBJJ-UT Makassar obtained an average score of $\geq 4,000$ which is classified as very good.

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