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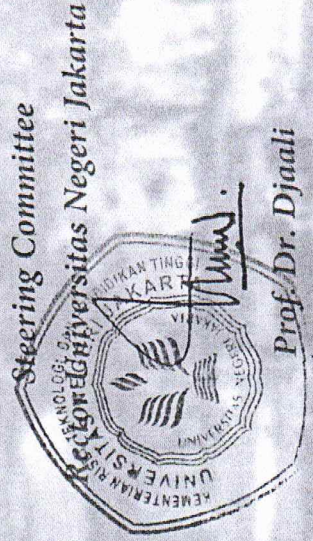
Evaluation of Practice/Practicum Assessment Standard

in Primary-Teacher Education Program

at Universitas Terbuka's Bogor Regional Office

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Abstract

Each practice/practicum course in the Universitas Terbuka (UT)'s Primary-Teacher Education Program has a unique assessment characteristic and requires special method in order to cater physical distance challenge among UT's Regional Office, supervisors and students. In this regard, UT has introduced quality-assurance procedures to conduct its practice/practicum. Clear guidelines have been developed for every module, furthermore, UT's Regional Office has been assigned to provide briefing to supervisors prior to the execution of each practice/ practicum. Nevertheless, a documents study in 2015 has identified about 24% of supervisors failed to use the standard assessment format. These obstacles have created difficulties to achieve the desired learning objectives. This paper is a qualitative description of one year study conducted in UT Bogor Regional Office through literature study as well as interviews with UT's staff, supervisors and students. In order to ensure that the learning objectives are achieved, it is required to have specific quality assurance (QA) procedures and clear practice/practicum guidelines that are applicable for students and supervisors.

Keywords: QA, practice/practicum assessment, distance learning

Universitas Terbuka (UT) is a state-run higher education institution in Indonesia which uses distance and open learning system. UT offers a number course programs, such as Primary-teacher Education Program. In the primary-teacher education program curriculum, there are 7 (seven) practice/practicum courses out of total 48 courses offered, namely '*Praktikum IPA di SD*' (course code: PDGK4107), '*Pembelajaran Kelas Rangkap*' (course code: PDGK4302), '*Pendidikan Jasmani dan Olahraga*' (course code: PDGK4208), '*Pembelajaran Terpadu di SD*' (course code: PDGK4205), '*Pembelajaran Berwawasan Kemasyarakatan*' (course code: PDGK4306), '*Pemantapan Kemampuan Mengajar'* (course code: PDGK4209, and '*Pemantapan Kemampuan Profesional*' (course code: PDGK4501).

'*Praktikum IPA di SD'* is classified as a **practicum** course, while the rest of courses are classified as **practice**. *Practice* is a learning process for the students to apply concepts, procedures and/or skill in either real situation or programmable, guided and independent simulation. On the other hand, *practicum* is a learning activity through observations, experiments or examinations of a concept, principle or material inside or outside of laboratory (Tim Universitas Terbuka, 2015).

As an education institution applying distance learning system, UT conducts practice/practicum activity in its regional offices, including Bogor Regional Office. UT's Regional Offices, which spread all over Indonesia, are operational unit located in various districts and act as extension of Universitas Terbuka (Said, et.al, 2007).

The execution of practice/practicum with distance learning system requires special method and treatment. Aside of the complexity, the implementation is also unique since each of the course

has its own characteristics and assessment format that is different with each other. As such, clear, detailed and well-organized planning, preparation, execution and result management (e.g. producing score that can be processed by the system) are needed.

Practice/practicum in the primary-teacher education program is designed to be carried out in 8 (eight) face-to-face learning sessions and 2 (two) hours for each session which is similar with the execution of the other courses tutorial. Both practice/practicum and non-practice/non-practicum courses schedules are designed in one package activity.

There are 3 (three) student assignments assessment points for the non-practice/non-practicum courses, which is at the third, fifth and seventh face-to-face session. Meanwhile for practice/practicum courses, the assessment is conducted specifically. Each of the course has unique assessment method and is different with regular course (non-practice/non-practicum) assessment method. For this reason, Bogor Regional Office proactively initiate the evaluation of practice/practicum activity at the fourth session to ensure that the supervisors has correctly implemented assessment method for practice/practicum activity.

As the result, based on literature study in Bogor Regional Office for period of 2015.1, there are 21 out of 84 (25 %) supervisors, and for period of 2015.2, there are 34 out of 140 (24%) supervisors of practice/practicum primary-teacher education program who do not use standard assessment format even though there have been briefings conducted by Bogor Regional Office to the supervisors prior to the execution of practice/practicum.

As a consequence, the score format is not qualified to be processed either procedurally or systemically as it has not fulfilled ISO 9001: 2008 quality assurance requirement. Bogor Regional Office, in this case, needs time to return the incorrect score to the associated supervisors to be fixed. Location/domicile of supervisors that are spread out in the areas with limited communication/ connection is indeed a challenge. The timeline of execution is only left 4 (four) out of 8 (eight) sessions and the duration to process the score using standardized application program is also limited.

The above facts have created pressure and frustration to Bogor Regional Office staff that is also stretched in number. In addition to time and resources, there is also extra cost incurred. In short, there is a gap between standard procedures or standard format with the real execution. Another important thing to be considered is that for 3 (three) face-to-face sessions, the practice/practicum process did not run as it has supposed to and the objectives of practice/practicum were not achieved.

In line with Susilo, et.al. (2015),and *Sadjati and Pertiwi (2013).* the evaluation of practice/ practicum execution is very important, especially to understand students' and supervisors' perception of (1) practice/ practicum guidelines, (2) practice/practicum execution, and (3) obstacles and challenges faced by the students and supervisors. The evaluation of practice/ practicum is also in line with Castolo and Diana Lee (2013) who stated that *the learning environment and learning process of the Open University system must bridge the gap between the learners' expectation and perception*, therefore, the root causes of Quality Assurance (QA)

implementation impacting the achievement of practice/practicum learning objectives can be overcome.

Research Methodology

This research is a descriptive-qualitative research by conducting documentation study (of the practice/practicum course tools and methods), literature study and interviews with practice/practicum supervisors, students and tutor/supervisor briefing officer. The research was conducted in UT's Bogor Regional Office in the year 2015.

Population of the research is all practice/practicum supervisors in UT's Bogor Regional Office in period of 2015.2. Sample of students are the students who have registered in UT's Bogor Regional Office in period of 2015.2. Sample of supervisors is 20-30% from the total population, while sample for students is the students who attended Bogor Regional Office.

Data was collected through documentation study, practice/practicum score data especially the format of the assessment, as well as interviews with problematic supervisors. Interviews with students and briefing officers were also conducted to validate the findings.

This research includes a study case in the Indonesia Open University (UT) specifically in one of the branches that has initiated this program as a prospective model to be applied across the nation. *The success of its implementation could be applied for another open university around the world. This research is not to generalize the problem through a single case, but to develop theoretical perspectives to understand broader terms* (Blackman & Kennedy, 2007).

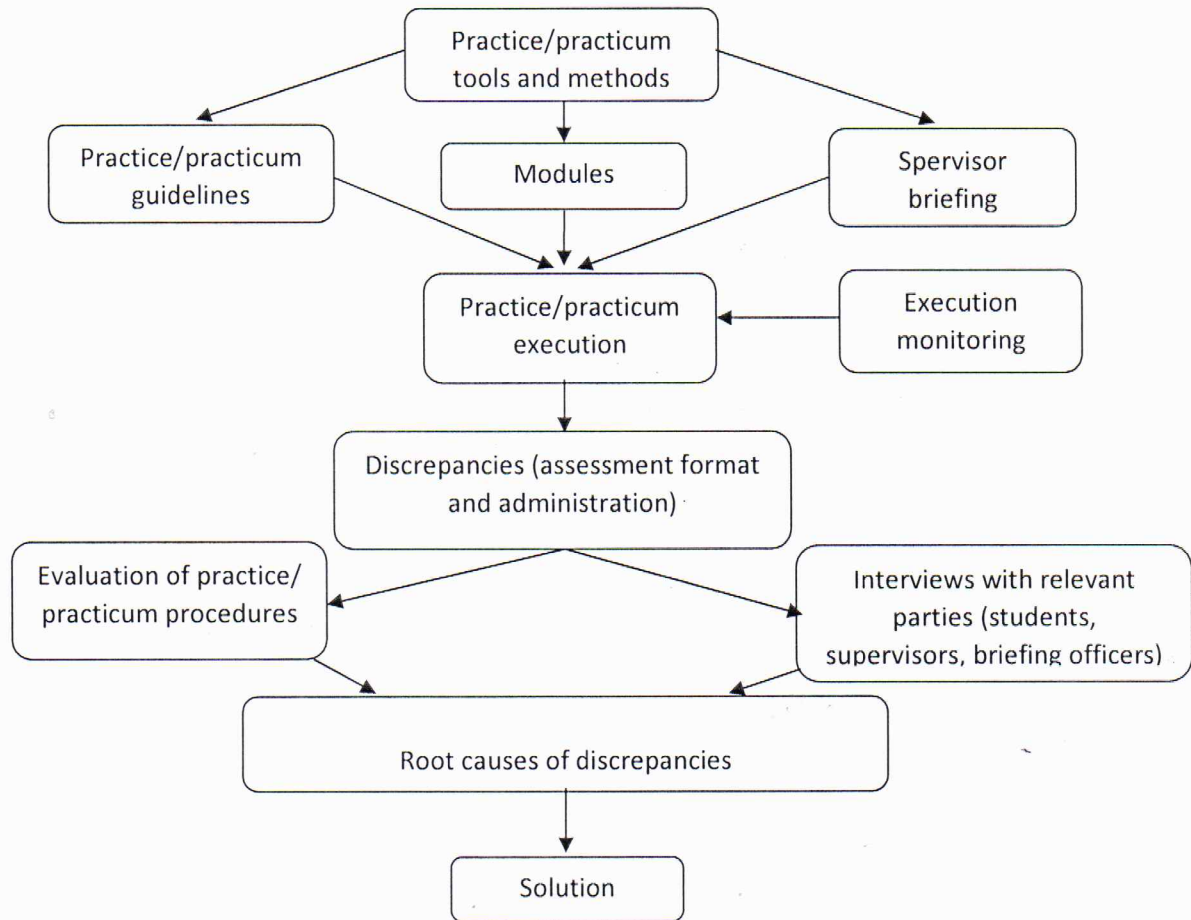The research framework is illustrated as below:

Figure 1. Research Framework

Practice/practicum execution in UT is supported by practice/practicum tools, such as guidelines, instruments, main module dan supervisor briefing. During the execution of practice/practicum, there is a mechanism of monitoring which is conducted according to the policy of UT Vice Rector *number: 4714/UN31/LL/2014* on the guidelines of face-to-face tutorial (TTM) monitoring by UT regional office staff. TTM monitoring includes monitoring of scientific paper writing and practice/practicum execution by UT regional office staff for 30% total TTM location

in UT regional office area. Monitoring is conducted one time per TTM location per semester. TTM location that is monitored in the next semester should be different with TTM location that is monitored in the previous semester.

Although the guidelines has changed to 20% of total TTM location and monitoring has been conducted in three different location in year 2015, there are still challenges to monitor the whole practicum classes. Therefore, UT Bogor Regional Office proactively asks practice/practicum supervisor to send initial draft of practice/practicum score by email to ensure the conformity of practice/ practicum assessment format that were used.

Significance of the Study

Evaluation on practice/practicum assessment procedures has been conducted based on discrepancy findings to the standard assessment format. The scope of observation is defined from the preparation of practice/practicum execution until the dispatching of practice/practicum score to Bogor Regional Office. It is assumed that if the dispatch of the score has complied with the procedures (on-time and in the right format), so that the score can then be processed. The dispatch chain to UT Central is assumed as less challenging since Bogor Regional Office only needs to validate assessment format and key-in to the system. This research focuses on developing the understanding of students' and supervisors' perception on practicum guidelines, practicum execution and challenges faced.

Findings and Discussions

According to documentation study, there are 140 practice/practicum supervisors employed in Bogor Regional Office in period 2015.2. It consists of 17 supervisors for PDGK4107 course, 27 supervisors for PDGK4205 course, 19 supervisors for PDGK4208 course, 52 supervisors for PDGK4302 course and 25 supervisors for PDGK4306 course. Out of 140 supervisors, 34 (24.29 %) produced incorrect assessment format. They are supervisors from Kota Bogor (3 persons), Kabupaten Bogor (16 persons), Cianjur (11 persons), and Sukabumi (4 persons). Supervisor's error in applying correct assessment format has substantiated the findings of the research done by Kadarwati (2014) in Semarang regional office.

In the effort to solve the problem of non-conformity between practice/practicum procedures and their real executions, series of interviews have been conducted with the problematic supervisors and have indicated the following results:

No.	Issue descriptions	Number of respondents
1	Supervisor considers that the assessment criteria is very complicated	50% (17 out of 34 respondents)
2	Supervisor complains about insufficient honorarium	35.3% (12 out of 34 respondents)

The above facts are in line with the interview result with 5 (five) tutor briefing officers. Every semester, these officers have always been asked the same question from practice/practicum supervisors on adequacy of honorarium. Practice/ practicum honorarium is similar to regular course honorarium even though practice/ practicum execution is far more complex than the regular courses (non-practice/ non-practicum) tutorial.

Interviews with 40 students participated in practice/practicum period 2015.2 who have attended Bogor Regional Office, revealed the fact that the students only know practice/ practicum assessment criteria only on module 5 or 6. This has led the students, in the third session, to just follow practice/practicum supervisor to complete essay assignment as first assignment, as the same assessment in the regular course (non-practice/ non-practicum).

Based on the interview results, there are three area that are crucial to be resolved as below:

1) Students do not know the assessment criteria information at the beginning of modules since the criteria is stated only in module 5 or 6. As a consequence, the students are late to understand learning objectives that are expected to be achieved.

2) Practice/practicum assessment criteria is too complicated to be implemented, given the number of sessions to execute practice/practicum is the same with regular course tutorial (non-practice/ non-practicum)

3) Imbalanced honorarium between practice/practicum supervisor and regular course tutor (non-practice/non-practicum) even though the complexity to conduct those two activities are very different.

Meanwhile, as Universitas Terbuka has implemented quality assurance ISO 9001: 2008, the recruitment process for practice/practicum supervisors by UT Bogor Regional Office should comply with the aforementioned ISO guideline, especially JKOP BB01 on selection and evaluation procedures of non-UT academic staff. In the guidelines, it is stipulated that the

requirement for supervisors is having background related to his/her practice/practicum course, having minimum S1 (bachelor) degree, and is experienced in teaching the relevant field.

In order to enhance the supervisors competency, every semester, UT Bogor Regional Office provides briefing to the supervisors prior to practice/ practicum execution. During the briefing sessions, supervisors are provided with the information of practice/practicum assessment and execution procedures. Supervisors are also given opportunities to discuss the area which are less understood. However, it is still not sufficient to optimize practice/practicum supervisors' performance.

In line with Schmitt Antje, et.al. (2012) who indicated that *selection, optimization, and compensation (SOC) strategy use was positively related to job satisfaction, but unrelated to fatigue*, there is a need to simplify practice/ practicum assessment format as the supervisors in charge are not Universitas Terbuka's permanent staff. This is also aligned with Sharma Shraddha's, et.al (2014) opinion that *the success of any organization depends on how it attracts recruits, motivates, and retains its workforce. Therefore, organizations need to be more flexible so that they develop their talented workforce and gain their commitment.*

Practice/practicum procedures are too rigid, difficult and do not motivate practice/ practicum supervisors. This is caused by limited practice/practicum execution frequency, 8 (eight) sessions per semester, which is similar with regular courses (non-practice/ non-practicum). The number of students is supposed to be less than the number of students in regular course and there is inadequate practice/ practicum tools. Moreover, practice/practicum supervisors has permanent

job (full-time) commitment in the other institutions. These will open a hole for practice/ practicum supervisors to not fulfil practicum procedures.

Practice/practicum supervisor's commitment to obey the guidelines defined by UT has actually been agreed and signed by the supervisors in tutor/ supervisor declaration form ISO Document BB01-RK02-RII.0. However, the above does not guarantee that practice/practicum will run in accordance with the procedures. Even though procedures of tutor/supervisor evaluation by students has been specified in ISO BB01-RK03a-RII.0 and by UT has been specified in ISO BB01-RK03b-RII.0, but they are still not able to detect and assess the performance of the practice/practicum supervisor accurately due to assessment bias from the students. Placing practicum assessment guidelines in the middle of course subjects has added difficulties in practice/practicum process. Students has lack of control of tutorial/practice/practicum execution. Students know practice/practicum assessment criteria only at the fourth session. They realize procedural error in practice/practicum class only after three sessions and after completing the first assignment in essay as the regular courses (non- practice/non-practicum) assessment. This occurred because supervisor explains practicum assessment criteria only at the fourth session, following material module sequence. This is worrying as this problem cannot be detected by monitoring scheme developed by the UT that limits both monitoring frequency and the number of monitored locations tutorial/practice/practicum.

Based on that, UT Bogor Regional Office took the initiative to ask the supervisor to submit the assessment draft and practicum reports after the third session via email. This action is applied to ensure that at the third session, practice/practicum supervisor does not give essay type

assignment as assessment component of the first assignment. In addition, UT Bogor Regional Office staff who is assigned to monitor will validate tutorial administration including the completeness of tutorial activity plan used by the tutor/supervisor in tutorial/ practice/practicum class. However, it is still less effective given the amount of tutorial/practice/practicum classes that need to be monitored and lack of staff's competence in understanding the tutorial administration and the whole practice/ practicum process.

The imbalanced honorarium amount received by practice/practicum supervisor with honorarium received in regular course (non-practice/non-practicum) has triggered supervisor's lack of motivation to perform practice/ practicum procedure. This is consistent with Ghazanfar Faheem, et.al (2011) who specified that *satisfaction with compensation can be factor of work motivation.* Based on this fact, it is important to review and recalculate practice/practicum supervisor honorarium according to the ratio of the complexity of implementation and the number of students participated.

Apart from the three identified root causes based on interviews and literature studies, supervisor should proactively gain in-depth understanding of the module before conducting practice/practicum activity. Students need to be critical to comprehend the learning objectives of each of the course. UT is expected to re-publish the course description guideline book to facilitate students in understanding learning objectives that need to be achieved. UT regional office can continue to closely evaluate the implementation of practice/practicum by producing warning letter to the supervisor that violates the procedures and/or replacing the problematic supervisor.

Conclusions and Suggestions

According to the study above, it can be concluded that the gap between practice/ practicum QA assessment standard and its real execution still exist. Several area in the execution of practice/ practicum that need attention are as following: (1) student and supervisor are late to understand practice/practicum procedures because the guidelines is placed in the middle of course subjects and not in the front-page of each module; (2) practice/practicum assessment format is too rigid to be used by supervisor; (3) lack of motivation from the practice/practicum supervisor resulted from lack of distinction between regular course tutor's honorarium and practice/practicum supervisor's honorarium; and (4) lack of monitoring frequency, especially for practice/practicum courses. For these reasons, then, some suggestions are being proposed as follows:

1. Practice/practicum execution procedures should be placed in the front-page of each practice/practicum module instead of in the middle of course subject

2. Simplification of practice/practicum assessment format is recommended without deducting the essence of competency goal achievement

3. Distinction between regular course and practice/practicum supervisor's honorarium is recommended to motivate practice/practicum supervisor

4. Practice/practicum monitoring should be designed in more detailed and budgeted specifically

5. Suggestion for further research is to have deeper understanding of correlation between practice/practicum supervisor's honorarium with the complexity of practice/practicum procedures and the performance of practice/practicum supervisor.

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