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Online Exam Services Improvement at Palembang Open University (SUO Policy Implementation)

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Abstract

One of the policies implemented by the Open University to measure student competency is through the implementation of the online examination system (SUO). SUO implementation is aimed at giving students the choice of exam models. Through SUO, students can take exams outside the UAS schedule, saving students travel time (because students do not have to wait for the next semester to repeat non-graduating courses), and make it easier for students to choose the test time. In its development, SUO which has been developed since 2009, received a good response from students, as evidenced by the increasing number of students who chose this system. To bring services closer to students, UT in 2019 began implementing SUO outside the UPBJJ-UT office, one of which was in the UT Palembang area. There are 4 locations selected for SUO, namely in Lahat, Baturaja, Belitang, and Lubuk Linggau. The choice is determined based on the number of students in the area, geographical constraints, and the availability of a stable internet network. The implementation of SUO in the regions has had a positive impact on students with good grades. However, the acquisition of good student exam scores is not yet supported by the Standard Operating Procedure concerning good administrative services. This paper aims to discuss how to make SUO outside the UPBJJ office have an Operational Standard Procedure for Online Examination Systems based on the conditions in the field, so as to be able to support quality Online Test System administration services for Open University students.

Keywords: Policy implementation, Online examination system

Background

Indonesian Open University or Universitas Terbuka (UT) is a university that applies a distance learning system. The concept of learning or distance education according to Minister of Research and Technology Regulation No.24 of 2012 is education that students are separate from educators and the learning process uses a variety of learning resources through information and communication technology and other media. The term long distance is geographically and physically separated between lecturers and students, so the learning process must be mediated by tools. These tools can be in the form of books or modules, electronic media such as radio / tape / television, or use the most recent media, namely online (use of IT). Through this distance learning system, it is expected that the Indonesian people who are geographically constrained or have not had the opportunity to take higher education can attend higher education.

In a distance learning system there are a series of processes that students must do. This process is generally the same as non-distance universities, such as registration, lectures (can be done independently or following on-line tutorials / face-to-face tutorials, and evaluating student learning outcomes through Exams. The difference between face-to-face and distance education is the process of distance education more and prioritizes "media". Students register online, are encouraged to study by taking courses based online, including online examinations. The implementation of the examination process which is still valid until now is that UT students are still taking two ways, written examinations and online examinations. The paper based test is a long and common practice so there are not too many obstacles in the procedure and skills in working on paper-based tests. Different from the usual exams, online exams are gradually implemented starting in 2009.

The online exam, known as the Online Examination System (SUO), is intended to provide opportunities for students who have clashed exam hours and who cannot conduct examinations according to the schedule of the written Semester Final Examination. SUO was held at the UPBJJ office about two weeks after the written examination. The one-day exam consists of 3 sessions and each session is 90 minutes long. The days, dates and hours of the SUO exam are determined by UPBJJ. In order for students to take part in the SUO, students must come to the UPBJJ office. In the development of the implementation of examinations, SUO-shaped examinations conducted at UPBJJ offices received positive responses from students, as seen from the number of SUO exam participants who increased from semester to semester. This condition then motivated UT to establish SUO policies outside the UPBJJ office. The implementation of SUO-based examinations conducted outside the UPBJJ office is expected to further facilitate services for students. The concept of good service is a service that makes it easy for customers to get access to services.

The implementation of the SUO policy in the UPBJJ UT area of Palembang (SUO outside the office) began to be piloted in four districts, namely Lahat, Belitang, Baturaja, and Muara Enim. From the implementation of SUO in the four locations, the encouraging thing is that the number of participants is increasing and most of the students participating in the SUO pass the exam. The implementation of a policy is said to be successful if it fulfills a number of aspects or variables that are required by the policy. The measure of the success of a policy implementation is not only assessed from one aspect, for example those who mostly pass through SUO but there are other aspects that must be considered so that the implementation of the SUO policy is better implemented.

Following are some of the obstacles that were successfully identified in implementing SUO held outside the UPBJJ

Palembang office. First, there is no standard technical procedure related to SUO preparation in the field, for example SUO participant procedures. Secondly, there are no regulations at the location of the exam, for example the examination room must be free of noise, competency of officers and how many officers are allowed to be in the room and what is their duty. Third, technical problems related to computer and network infrastructure facilities. For example, even though there are 25 computers with good specifications and also a network that is considered adequate (Telkom's ISP is 100MBps), however, at the start of SUO, 25 computers cannot directly log in to the Suo application. Students can only log in if the access process is one by one (cannot be together) and there is a 5-15 minute delay between one student and another student to be able to enter the system. Sometimes on location, the system does not respond to computers, where from 20 students there are only 2 students who can log in to the system, while the remaining 18 students cannot log in. Then students can log in again after 2 students who have logged in have finished the exam. Another problem is if the school-owned computer used by students for SUO is then also used for the Computer-Based National Examination (UNBK) of high school / vocational students then there are ports that do not match the SUO application system.

Regarding the problems in the implementation of SUO outside the UPBJJ office, this article will discuss why the implementation of the SUO policy outside the UPBJJ UT office in Palembang is experiencing obstacles. What policy was implemented by UPBJJ Palembang to overcome these obstacles.

Theoretical Review

To analyze the problems in the context of SUO implementation outside the UPBJJ office, two theories were used, namely the implementation of policies and examinations on line.

1. Policy implementation

The policy definition that has often been used as a reference is what was conveyed by Dye (1995: 2), namely "what government to do, what they do it and what difference it makes" means that is what the government does, what they do and why they do that. Whereas by knowing the opinion of Laswell and Kaplan (1970: 71), we will get a clearer understanding, namely as "a project program of goals, values, and practices", which means that a program is aimed at certain goals, values certain values, and certain practices. So, the policy in this case is related to what is the government's decision, which has goals and values and practices that have been determined or has become a decision.

A policy will show results and benefits if the policy has been implemented. Implementation according to Howlet and Rames (1995: 11) is a process for implementing policies to achieve results. Referring to the opinion of van Meter and van Horn (Wahab, 1997: 65) it is stated that the implementation process is actions carried out by individuals or officials or groups of government or the private sector directed at achieving the goals outlined in policy decisions. Sugono (1994: 137) said that policy implementation can be initiated if public policy objectives have been established, programs have been prepared and funds have been allocated for achieving the policy objectives.

2. Online exam

Examination is a way to determine the success or failure of the learning process. The test is essentially part of the process of evaluating an outcome. Guba and Lincoln (Arifin, 2011: 5) explain that evaluation is a process to describe the value or outcome of its value or the results of its evaluation. Ralp Tyler (Arikunto, 2010) reveals that evaluation is the process of collecting data to determine the extent, in what case, and which part of the educational goal has been achieved. In the field of education evaluation or examination is intended to measure the level of achievement of teaching goals to students so that teachers and students can know the level of ability in understanding the field of study. The exam is also a medium for measuring students' abilities, personality, and intelligence in a field of study, with the results of these measurements obtained by an assessment that can be used to make various decisions. According to Suharsimi Arikunto (2009: 10) "Tests are one form of evaluation instrument to measure how much students have the ability to understand and master the points of material that have been taught".

There are various types of examinations, namely essays, written tests, and online tests. The SUO held by UT is an online test. This exam is a form of evaluation for the learning process in UT to assess the success of the learning process.

Discussion

1. Online exam at UT

The exam is an evaluation tool for measuring student learning outcomes. Evaluation of learning outcomes at UT is carried out in the form of independent evaluations by students through practice and formative tests and independent training in each module; evaluation is also carried out by instructors in practical activities and practicums; tutor evaluates tutorial activities; evaluations are carried out directly by UT simultaneously throughout Indonesia in the final semester exam (UAS) or final program examination (Julaeha, 2004). To provide greater flexibility in terms of setting the time to take the final semester examination (UAS) for students, in 2004 UT developed a computerized examination system called the Computer-Based Examination (UBK), which was later refined to become the Online Examination

(SUO) system, which began in 2008. SUO began to be tested on the 2009.1 exam period in 6 (six) UPBJJ using the internet network speedy Virtual Private Network (VPN). Starting from the 2010 exam period, SUO has been conducted in all UPBJJ. SUO results at UPBJJ offices throughout Indonesia in general have been effective and efficient and have received good responses with more and more SUO participants (Pardede and Listyorini, 2010). Seeing the good response in the implementation of the SUO UT decided on SUO policies outside of the UT UPBJJ office. Trials outside the Palembang UT UPBJJ office were conducted in 2019.1 in four locations namely Lubuk Linggau, Lahat, Baturaja, and Belitang. Site selection is based more on the assumption of a more stable network connection in that place than other regions and ease of accessibility for UT students.

2. Implementation of SUO outside the UPBJJ Palembang office

As discussed in the sub-section of the theory, implementation is certainly related to policy. The meaning of the policy itself is all what the government does, what they do and why they do it. In the case of SUO implementation policies outside the UPBJJ office, all decisions made by UT, what is done and why UT conducts or implements SUO, must have gone through a number of considerations. Some of the considerations carried out by UT include the existence of a positive response from students, as shown by the increasing number of students who are asking to serve SUO year after year. Referring to the 2017 Open University Chancellor Work Report stated the average number of online exam participants per semester in 2016 rose to 85.6% for Non Basic Education programs and 40.6% for Basic Education programs (Chancellor Report, 2017). Likewise from the number of subjects who have objective examinations, 90% of the objective exam subjects have been held based on online examinations. Judging from the number of special participants in the UPBJJ-UT Palembang, SUO participants also increased from semester to semester.

On this basis, to improve service, the SUO was expanded not only at the UPBJJ office, but also outside the UPBJJ office. This is nothing but in accordance with the objectives of public policy. Public policy is strongly related to state administration, namely when public actors coordinate all activities related to tasks in order to meet various community needs through various public policies to meet the needs of society and the state (Taufiqurrahman, 2014: 9). The SUO policy carried out outside the UPBJJ office has thus become a policy to be held because of its positive impact on students in the region. A policy can be implemented because the program has been made or has been through a study, and funds have been allocated to achieve the policy objectives.

The implementation of the SUO policy outside the UPBJJ office that had been held in the 4 Districts had been supported by several procedures to implement it, first, support and permission from the place where the SUO was held. In this case the UT UPBJJ in the context of implementing the SUO has conducted an assessment of the permit from the location or place that will be used as an online test place. Second, after the permit has been obtained, the next step is to check the facilities and infrastructure to conduct SUO. The standards that must be possessed in order to carry out SUO are: computers totaling 25, at least dual core processors, 100 Mbps connections and Windows 10 applications, and a stable electricity network (there is a generator when the electricity is off).

There are several obstacles related to procedures and facilities in the context of implementing SUO outside the UPBJJ office. In the context of the constraints procedure, there is not yet a standardized standard of regulation for both the committee and for students who will take part in the SUO. Even though the regulation is already owned, the online examination procedures are somewhat different from the UAS. For example, during the SUO at Lahat, it was seen that the examination committee had not checked the identity of the SUO participant students. The committee must focus on preparing computer equipment. If the inspection process is not carried out, there is the potential for a test jockey. The room used for SUO is sometimes not sterile from unauthorized people where everyone can enter the SUO room without knowing their interests. The atmosphere of a noisy environment can disrupt the concentration of SUO participants. In the case of infrastructure facilities, as already mentioned in the background, the obstacles to starting or logging in, there is a delay between students with each other, in a fairly long span of up to 15 minutes. Computers on location cannot respond to systems and there are ports that do not match the SUO application system.

In the case of the emergence of problems in the field related to the implementation of the policy, it is theoretically stated that the new policy will appear to be the result and useful if the policy has been implemented. Therefore, the implementation of the SUO policy outside the UPBJJ office showed results when implemented. In general, SUO outside the UPBJJ office can be carried out well. However, specifically there are obstacles that must be addressed so that the implementation of the SUO improves and gets the desired results. A good result is if UT's goal to implement SUO is in accordance with the UT policy. Students through SUO can take exams outside the UAS period schedule specified in the UT Academic Calendar (Pardede and Listyarini, 2011). Besides that, the implementation of SUO outside the UPBJJ-UT office is to bring services closer to the community.

Conclusion

SUO policy outside the UPBJJ office is the right policy. This SUO policy was made to address the problems of UT students whose existence is spread in different areas and it is not easy to go to a city where the UPBJJ-UT office is located. The implementation of the SUO policy is of course to overcome these problems and bring the examination services closer to students. The effectiveness of the policy will be known if the policy has been implemented. SUO policies that have been implemented in Lahat, Lubuk Linggau, Baturaja and Belitang can run well, which means that the implementation of the policy can be implemented.

Some obstacles in the framework of implementing SUO policies are as follows: First, the SUO regulation has not yet been made which is carried out outside the UPBJJ office. Second, standardization of infrastructure has also not been standardized, including anticipation or mitigation provisions in the event of problems in the field. So far, Palembang's UPBJJ policy to overcome the obstacles in the field is to entrust Information Technology staff at UT Palembang to protect and improvise according to the conditions on the ground. Therefore, for better policy implementation, it is necessary to make regulations for SUO participants, standardize infrastructure facilities, and anticipate or mitigate constraints, and need to ensure adequate program design in the implementation process.

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