

Attractiveness to Become UT's Tutor

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Abstract

Tutor of distance education is an important factor to improve the quality of learning so that the Universitas Terbuka (UT) put the tutor as a strategic partner. The tutors come from lectures in universities and high school teachers who meet the requirements. Many factors are underlie them to become UT's tutors. To improve the services of UT against the tutor as a strategic partner, it is important for UT to identify those aspects which appeal them to become tutors. There has been no study conducted to analyze the attractiveness factors become tutors as this study attempted to. Contrary to initial assumptions, this study found that the main attraction became UT's is not time flexibility and financial variables but the variables of educational aspirations and social variables are more attractive factors to become a tutor of UT. This article also discussed various aspects of efforts to maintain the attractiveness and commitment as UT's tutors.

Keywords: Tutor, Attractiveness, Time flexibility, Educational Aspirations.

The purpose of education, including the distance education, is to facilitate the participants in achieving a certain competence that being the goal of an educational program. These competencies could be achieved by the students as a result of learning experiences which they acquired during the educational process. Therefore, educational institutions should focus on ensuring that the educational process give the maximum learning experience and competences according to student's potential. Educational institutions need to develop educational efforts and various performance benchmarks to ensure the optimum student learning outcomes. As a distance education institution, UPBJJ-UT Makassar has area of concern in recruiting qualified tutor who will provide effective learning support for UT's students in South Sulawesi (UPBJJ-UT Makassar, 2010). Through the effective learning support, attainments of student learning are expected to be maximal.

Face-to-face tutorials (TTM) is perhaps the most learning support favored by distance education students compared with other learning support available, such as online tutorials, tutorials radio, or even with the tutorial through television broadcasts. There are 2637 students of UT at South Sulawesi ask for face-to-face tutorial in the second half of 2010, while at the same time less than 100 students joined online tutorial. TTM may be favored by the students because of the habits of

face to face learning in their past level of education. It can be said that TTM is a bridge for students before they can learn independently in a distance learning system.

Recognizing that most of the students in distance education are unfamiliar with distance learning system and still relying on face-to-face learning, Universitas Terbuka (UT) provides TTM as mandatory service standard for some courses. For some other courses, including courses which is categorized as non pendas program, TTM is only held if requested by the student. Both mandatory TTM and requested TTM has main problem: how to make it effective in helping students to learn. Effectiveness of TTM depends on what happens in the tutorial rooms. Tutor is a learning manager in the tutorial rooms. Effectiveness of TTM depends heavily on the tutors.

Since 2007, UT's faculties in UPBJJ have to concentrate on supervising TTM implementation and does not allow them to become tutors. UT Tutors come from lecturer of universities other than UT and high school teachers who meet the requirements. Tutor is a partner for UT. UT need their expertise and they are willing to join the UT. Some underlying factors make them willing to join as UT's tutor. To improve the services of tutors UT as a strategic partner, it is important for UT to identify latent factors are the main attraction to be a tutor UT. Yet, there had no study conducted to analyze the factors of attraction become tutors. Some research on the tutor conducted at UT associated with tutors, among others, regarding the role of tutors in improving student learning success of UT (Elison, 1992) and the linkages between the educational background of the tutor with the students' score in final examination (Nurhasanah, 1993). This study attempts to identify the factors underlying the attraction of people to join as UT's tutors. Attraction factor to become a tutor can be an important reference in order to develop a better partnership between UT with tutors. The partnership will be productive when both sides understand the value of the underlying partnership.

Attractiveness refers to a quality that led to an interest or passion toward an object (Ortony, Clore & Collins, 1990). Object is associated with a purpose, such as a tourist attraction of an area associated with the destination for excursions to the area. Hollenbeck & Klein (1987) identified two factors that influence the attractiveness to achieve a goal (attractiveness of Goal Attainment), i.e. the situational factors and personal factors. According to Salancik (1978), situational factors include (1) publicness, (2) flexibility and opportunity to behave (volition), (3) explicitness, (4) reward structure, and (5) competition. Personal factors include: (1) need for achievement, (2) durability, (3) type of personality, (4) organizational commitment, (5) work commitments. (Yukl & Latham, 1978; Jackson 1974; Friedman & Rosenman, 1974).

These two factors affecting attractiveness, the situational factors and personal factors, need to be scrutinized of their relevance to condition of UT's tutor, especially in South Sulawesi. Situational factor is the attraction factor derived from

the object containing the attractiveness. Publicness variables, explicitness, and the competition are variables that less relevant for the UT tutors in South Sulawesi since it should be assumed that the tutor has a uniform perception on those three variables. Therefore, in this study, situational factors should be focused on two variables: time flexibility and reward structure. Both variables are assumed to be perceived variously by the tutors. In this study, the time flexibility is defined as opinion of tutors on how adaptive the implementation of tutorial to their daily activities as lecturers or teachers. Variable of rewards structure is limited to just financially and defined as the tutors opinion toward the amount of financial reward as a tutor.

Personal factors are the attraction factors that attached to a person who raised the reason to become tutor. Variable of needs for achievement is the personal needs that being the attraction to be a tutor at UT. In this study, the needs for achievement is focused on the need for contributing in educational quality improvement and will be named as educational aspirations variable. Thus, educational aspiration variable is defined as tutors opinion that being a tutor is the place to realize their ideals to contribute in developing a better education in South Sulawesi. Most of students (96%) in UPBJJ-UT Makassar is primary school teachers or kindergarten teachers (UPBJJ-UT Makassar, 2010). Educational aspirations associated with the realization that being a tutor is educating primary school teachers and, in turn, to improve the quality of basic education in South Sulawesi. Other personality factors that were examined in this study are the social variables related to the individual needs to socialize. In this case, the tutor is a medium to interact socially with another, students and tutors. Social variable is defined as tutor's opinion on their needs for socializing that encourage them to become tutors at UT.

Instrument being used to record data for variable of financial reward, flexibility of time, social, and educational aspirations was a questionnaire consisting of 16 statements in Likert scale format. Each variable is represented by four statements in the questionnaire. Respondents of this study were 55 tutors who visit the office UPBJJ-UT Makassar. Data analysis aimed to test for differences in average scores for the four variables studied using one-way ANOVA and explore these differences through analysis of post-hoc-test.

Results and Discussion

a. Results

The results of descriptive analysis on financial reward, time flexibility, educational aspirations, and social scores show the average value of 2.64, 2.72, 3.77, and 3.26 respectively. The order of magnitude on average, from large to small, is the educational aspirations, social, flexibility, and financial reward.

Table 1. Scores Description

Variable	N	Mean	Minimum	Maximum
Financial Reward	55	2,64	1,40	3,60
Time Flexibility	55	2,72	1,60	3,80
Educational aspiration	55	3,77	2,40	4,00
Social	55	3,26	2,00	4,00

Visually, the mean score for each variable looks like in Figure 1. The mean scores of variables seem most high for educational aspirations, while the financial variables have the lowest scores.

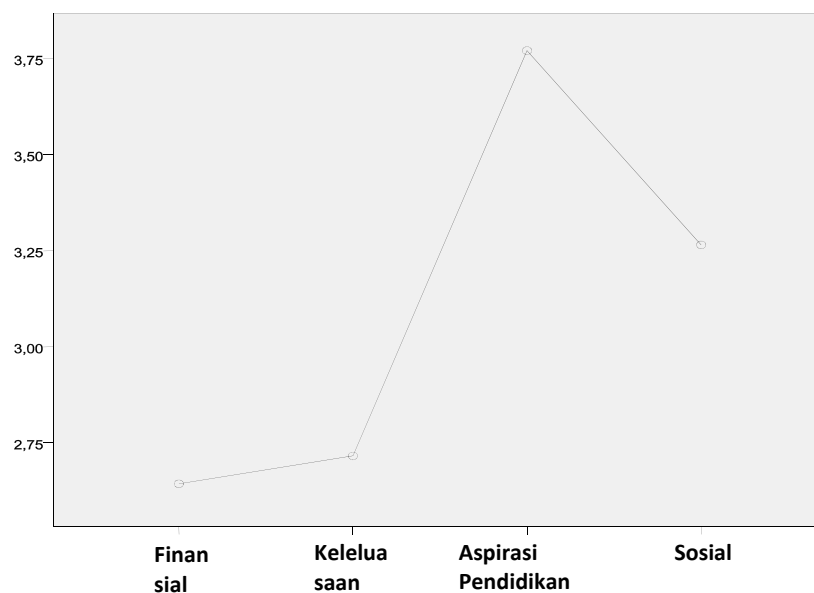


Figure 1. Comparison among variable scores

The mean score of the four variables are statistically significantly different as indicated by Table 2. This means the average score obtained from the four variables are not all equal to each other. In other words, further discussion on the difference of variable in terms of attractiveness become UT's tutors have an adequate empirical basis.

Table 2. Differences Among Mean Scores Variables

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	45,811	3	15,270	74,712	,000
Within Groups	44,148	216	,204		
Total	89,960	219			

Although mean scores obtained from the four variables are not all equal to each other, the differences should also be examined which variable is statistically different from one another by using post-hoc test, as shown in Table 3. It appears that the pair of financial variable and flexibility variable do not differ significantly, while the other pair variable was different from each other.

Table 2. Mean Difference between Variables

(I) Variable	(J) Variable	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.
Financial Reward	Flexibility	-,07273	,870
	Educational Aspiration	-1,12727*	,000
	Social	-,62182*	,000
	Flexibility	,07273	,870
Flexibility	Financial Reward	-	,000
	Educational Aspiration	1,05455*	,000
	Social	-,54909*	,000
	Flexibility	1,12727*	,000
Educational Aspiration	Financial Reward	1,05455*	,000
	Social	,50545*	,000
	Flexibility	-,54909*	,000
	Educational Aspiration	-,50545*	,000
Social	Financial Reward	,62182*	,000
	Flexibility	-,54909*	,000
	Educational Aspiration	-,50545*	,000
	Flexibility	,54909*	,000

b. Discussion

It was reasonable to have initial assumption that the successful recruitment of tutors is determined partly by good tutor's fees and the implementation of tutorials on Sunday. Implementation of tutorials on Sunday is considered to give time flexibility for the tutors who are generally professors or high school teachers who have to work on a workday. However, in contrast to these assumptions, the results showed that the variable structure of rewards and flexibility of time is not the main reason a person becomes tutor UT. The mean score of the financial rewards and flexibility of time are 2.6 and 2.7 respectively as shown in Table 1. Since the response to "disagree" was 2 and the response to "Neutral" is 3, then both the mean value can be interpreted that time flexibility and financial reasons perceived between "disagree" and "neutral" by the tutors. In other words, for the tutor in UPBJJ-UT Makassar, the factor of financial rewards and flexibility of time factor is not the main reason they are lured to become a tutor at UT.

What is the most important reason for tutors when they are willing to become UT's tutors? The results showed that the most important reason for them to become UT's tutors are the things associated with educational aspirations and social activities. Table 1 shows that the variable educational aspirations had an average score reached 3.77, which mean that the tutor tend to "agreed" to the statement that by becoming a tutor UT they participate to develop the quality of education in South Sulawesi. In other words, idealism to improve the quality of education, especially primary education and kindergarten in South Sulawesi, has been a major factor to become UT's tutors.

Social activities which are inherent in the activities of tutorial are an attraction for the tutors when they decide to become a UT's tutor. Tutorial held on Sundays or on any other day based on agreement with students is a social arena for tutors to meet students who are generally have the same profession with them, namely the primary school teacher or a kindergarten. In addition, meeting fellow tutor is also a main attraction since in particular they can travel together to the tutorial places. A tutor even refuses to be placed in the city where he lived. He prefers to travel to another city which is more than eight hours traveling with his friends who are also UT's tutor. Therefore, it is not surprising that the social reasons to be tutor assessed with a score of 3.26. This suggests that the social aspect in the implementation of face-to-face tutorials tend to be rated "agree" by respondents.

To better understand to the strong appeal of the personal rather than situational to become UT's tutor, perhaps it is better to learn the social and cultural conditions in South Sulawesi, where the tutor is located. South Sulawesi is inhabited by two major ethnics, i.e. Bugis and Makassar. As stated previously, UT tutors were recruited from professors of college, high school teachers are qualified, or officials of education in the district / city. They generally occupy higher social strata in their community. They have higher education than most

other citizens. Of the total 544 tutors registered in UPBJJ-UT Makassar in 2009, there are six tutors who educated doctoral and 198 master (UPBJJ-UT Makassar, 2010). In South Sulawesi, in 2008, 11.48% never been to school, 26.61% uncompleted primary school, 28,02% completed elementary school, 15.95% completed junior high school, 11.69 completed senior high school, 2.05 college graduates, and 4.17% university graduates.

Associated with local cultural values in South Sulawesi, especially the Bugis, Tamar (2007) confirmed that there are seven local cultural values are intertwined in shaping the Bugis people who have an impact on behavior. Seven local cultural values are (1) siri', (2) pesse', (3) getteng, (4) asitinajang, (5) lempu, (6) acca, (7) reso. The first two cultural values, namely siri' and pesse' relates to the results of this study. Siri' is at the core culture of the Bugis and the value of individuality associated with self-esteem, self respect, and shame (usually associated with certain objects such as achievement, violated her rights and dignity, and survive in conditions associated with prestige). Pesse' is values of solidarity, the tie of kinship and brotherhood in society. In addition, there are also some views which influence the Bugis community view of life as expressed in the phrase "sipakatau sipakalebbi" which means mutual respect (thank to Drs. Zakaria, M. Si for discussing with the author of this matter). In short, honour is an important values among people in South Sulawesi.

Social values and culture, as it has been described, explain that tutors in UPBJJ-UT Makassar are citizens with good social status and financially they are pretty well established. In addition, culturally tutors are strongly influenced by local culture that focuses on the high honour and a strong social solidarity. Thus, it is understood that the attractiveness to become a tutor of UT is more dictated by personal factors rather than situational factors.

Financial rewards and flexibility of time that provided by UT in the implementation of TTM are including to the situational factors of attraction to become a tutor at UT. Apparently these situational factors are not the main consideration to become a tutor at UT. This does not mean these factors are not important, but these factors have not been a problem for UT's tutor. Based on the results of this research, it can be noted that they are more concerned about personal factors, i.e the factors of education aspirations fulfillment and the social aspects. Therefore, this following things need to be a focus for UPBJJ-UT Makassar to increase the commitment from TTM's tutors, namely:

1. After every period of the face-to-face tutorial, UPBJJ-UT Makassar need to thank the tutors with emphasis on aspects of their role in improving the competence of human resources in South Sulawesi, especially the elementary school or kindergarten teachers.
2. UPBJJ-UT Makassar need to involve tutors in various activities that can demonstrate their effort as tutors has paid off, i.e in various seminars for students, diploma ceremony, or graduation ceremony at the office of the UT Center.

3. UPBJJ-UT Makassar need to encourage tutors to form social networks to fulfill their wish socializing with students and between tutors. Social networking can be a real social networking or virtual social networking. For that, UPBJJ-UT Makassar can use a social networking media such as Facebook or Twitter that are very popular in Indonesia.

Conclusion

Effectiveness of TTM depends on what happens in the tutorials room and the tutor is the manager of learning in that room, so that TTM's effectiveness is very dependent on the tutor. To improve the services to the tutor as a strategic partner, it is important for TTM's organizer to identify the attractiveness factors to become a tutor at UT. The study concluded that the personal factor has greater impact as attractiveness to become UT's tutor than the situational factors. Personal factors include variable of educational aspirations and social variable, whereas situational factors include the financial rewards variable and time flexibility variable. Based on these results, UPBJJ-UT Makassar as the organizer of TTM's in South Sulawesi needs to increase the variety of activities to accomodate the educational aspirations and social aspects of the tutor as reflected in the results of this study.

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