

ALUMNI'S PERCEPTION ON PROGRAM SPECIFICATION OF ELT PROGRAM AT UNP (BASED ON AUN-QA CRITERIA)

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Abstract

English Language Teaching Program at UNP is trying to improve its curriculum in order to get certification from AUN-QA (ASEAN University Network-Quality Assurance). One requirement needed is getting feedback from stakeholders on Program Specification as one of the important parts of curriculum. This survey study aimed to find the alumni's perception on Program Specification of English Language Teaching Program and to find what improvement needed based on the alumni's perception. The data were collected through an online questionnaire given to 74 alumni who were divided into two groups: the alumni who work in education field and the ones who work in non-education field. In analyzing the data, the percentage of each item in the questionnaire was found. The questionnaire given consists of 15 items. From the first group of participants, the results show that 44.34% of the alumni strongly agree and 51.6% of the alumni agree with the statements given. From the second group, it is found that 57.61% of the alumni strongly agree and 38.3% of the alumni agree with the statements given. Even though there are few comments given by the alumni who gave negative responses, most of them have good perception on the Program Specification of English Language Teaching at UNP. From the finding, it can be concluded that there is slight improvement needed based on the alumni's perception.

Key words: Program Specification, AUN-QA

Introduction

Curriculum development is one of important parts in education. There are few researchers conducted studies related to this area. First, Refnaldi and Arianto (2017) conducted a research about need analysis of graduates towards English Education curriculum at UNP. Second, Refnaldi, Aryuliva Adnan, and Fitriawati (2017) conducted a research about mapping program learning outcome to meet AUN-QA criteria. Suharmanto et al (2013) also did a research dealing with a Look at an Initial Attempt to Mapping the English Curriculum at UM. Besides, there is another research conducted by Amidi et al (2018) about what preparation and revision should be made to curriculum at Post graduate program of UNNES in order to get certification from AUN-QA.

In order to meet the demands of today, English Education Program at Universitas Negeri Padang is trying to review and improve its curriculum. It is due to the fact that the curriculum must always be up to date. It is not feasible if the curriculum is never revised and developed while the globalization continues to change. If the development and revision of the curriculum is not done, the goals aspired by education practitioners will not be achieved. Surely, this will result in the declining quality of English Education Program at Universitas Negeri Padang.

One of ways in increasing the quality of English Education Program at UNP is revising the curriculum by looking at the criteria set by AUN-QA (Asean University Network Quality Assurance). AUN-QA is an ASEAN-level organization engaged in education at higher education level. In the Guide to AUN-QA Assessment at Institutional Level (2016), it is stated that AUN-QA tries to develop higher education quality by having a holistic quality assurance system which is used to develop the standards of academic, research and service for all universities belonged to its members.

In order to obtain certification from the AUN-QA and by the mean of fulfilling the criteria set by AUN-QA, the English education curriculum at Universitas Negeri Padang must meet the criteria or standards established by AUN-QA. In order to achieve and meet the criteria determined, the feedback from education

practitioners such as students, lecturers, alumni, and stakeholders towards the implemented curriculum needs to be gathered in order to get inputs.

In this study, the researcher focuses on the alumni's perception towards the three criteria set by AUN-QA: expected learning outcomes, program specification, and program structure and content. Alumni is one of the stakeholders who certainly play an important role in curriculum development in universities because alumni are the ones who know more about what things are needed in the field of work today. From this research, it is hoped that the writer find the alumni's opinions and suggestions toward the curriculum so that it can be revised and evaluated to meet the international standards, AUN-QA standards.

Research Method

This survey study was conducted to alumni who were grouped into two categories: the alumni who work in education field (46 participants) and the ones who work in non education field (28 participants). An online questionnaire through *Google Form* is used to gather the data. It consists of 15 statements related to the Program Specification of English Education Program at UNP. There are four scales in the questionnaire: SA (strongly agree), A (agree), DA (disagree), and SD (strongly disagree). The alumni were required to choose one. After that, the percentages for each item's response were found.

Result and Discussion

In the data analysis, we coded the data by finding the percentage from the two groups. To get a clear conclusion, some comments given by the alumni who gave negative responses were explained below.

Result

In order to find the percentages for each item, the frequency of alumni who chose strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D), and strongly disagree (SD) are described below.

a. Alumni who Work in Education Field

There are 7 statements related to the program identity. The alumni's responses toward each item can be seen in the table below.

Table 1. Percentage of the Alumni's Responses toward Program Identity

No	Statements	SA	A	D	SD
1	The Program Name is English Language Education	41.30	45.65	13.04	0.00
2	Language of Instruction is mainly English	47.83	52.17	0.00	0.00
3	Mode of study is full time	67.39	23.91	8.70	0.00
4	Type of study is campus based	67.39	23.91	8.70	0.00
5	Study Duration Minimum: 3.5 Years	45.65	50.00	2.17	2.17
6	Study Duration Maximum: 7 Years	56.52	30.43	10.87	2.17
7	One of the entry requirement is applicant must be able to demonstrate the ability to use English to a minimum standard of 425 ITP TOEFL score or 4.5 IELTS score	60.87	30.43	4.35	4.35

From the table above, 100% of the participants gave positive responses towards the second statement in the questionnaire. All of them agree that language of instruction is mainly English. It indicates that using fully English during the instruction is important. Meanwhile, the most negative responses got for the first and the sixth statements. Most of the participants do not really agree with the name of program and the study duration. These can be revised based on the comments got.

Related to the name of the program, some alumni said that the name should be English Language Teaching. This is due to the fact English Language Teaching is famous abroad. Besides, for the study duration, the alumni stated that the maximum of study duration should be only 5 or 6 years. Having 7 years is considered too long. The students may not have high motivation to finish their study soon. Thus, if the students are given deadline in 5 or 6 years, they will put much effort and work based on it. This comment also indicates that the faster students finish their study, the better this program will be.

Table 2. Percentage of the Alumni's Responses toward the Potential Careers

No	Statements	SA	A	D	SD
1	Graduates of B.Ed in English Language Education can work as teachers or researchers of English Language Education in high schools, colleges, institutes and research centers	39.13	60.87	0.00	0.00
2	Graduates of B.Ed in English Language Education can work as Translators	47.83	50.00	2.17	0.00
3	Graduates of B.Ed in English Language Education can work as Public Relation Employees	50.00	50.00	0.00	0.00
4	Graduates of B.Ed in English Language Education can work as Employees where English is used for Specific Purposes	41.30	56.52	2.17	0.00
5	Opportunities for higher education: M.Ed in English Language Education	41.30	58.70	0.00	0.00
6	Opportunities for higher education: M.A in Applied Linguistics	58.70	41.30	0.00	0.00
7	Opportunities for higher education: M.A in Translations	54.35	45.65	0.00	0.00
8	Opportunities for higher education: M.A in English Literature	54.35	45.65	0.00	0.00

From the table 2 above, most of alumni gave positive responses toward the potential careers of graduates except for items number 2 and 4. The alumni seem not agree if the graduates can work as translators and public relation employees. This is in relation with the comments they gave. It is said that the focus should be on education only. Being translators or public relation employees should be directed to non education students. This comment is true since education graduates will be better work in education field. However, if it is seen from the criteria set by AUN-QA, the alumni should master not only teaching skills, but also other skills needed in today era.

b. Alumni who Work in Non Education Field

Table 3. Percentage of the Alumni's Responses toward Program Identity

No	Statements	SA	A	D	SD
1	The Program Name is English Language Education	78.57	17.86	3.57	0.00
2	Language of Instruction is mainly English	67.86	28.57	3.57	0.00
3	Mode of study is full time	46.43	39.29	14.29	0.00
4	Type of study is campus based	42.86	50.00	7.14	0.00
5	Study Duration Minimum: 3.5 Years	64.29	28.57	7.14	0.00
6	Study Duration Maximum: 7 Years	32.14	53.57	14.29	0.00
7	One of the entry requirement is applicant must be able to demonstrate the ability to use English to a minimum standard of 425 ITP TOEFL score or 4.5 IELTS score	57.14	39.29	3.57	0.00

From the table 3 above, most of participants gave positive responses toward all items. However, the lowest come to statements number 3 and 6. The mode of study which is full time study is not really demanded by the alumni. As well as the participants from education field said, the alumni in this group also stated that if it is full time study, there is no chance for student to implement in the real life what they have learnt in campus. Students should have more experiences outside and gain link with non academic organization so that they can improve their information about world, not only about English teaching and learning. In addition, the alumni do not really agree with maximum duration of the study which is 7 years. 5 years will be good. This is in relation with the comments from alumni in the first group who said that 7 years is too long and it can decrease students' motivation to finish the study.

Table 4. Percentage of the Alumni's Responses toward the Potential Careers

No	Statements	SA	A	D	SD
1	Graduates of B.Ed in English Language Education can work as teachers or researchers of English Language Education in high schools, colleges, institutes and research centers	60.71	39.29	0.00	0.00
2	Graduates of B.Ed in English Language Education can work as Translators	64.29	35.71	0.00	0.00

Table 4. Cont

3	Graduates of B.Ed in English Language Education can work as Public Relation Employees	71.43	28.57	0.00	0.00
4	Graduates of B.Ed in English Language Education can work as Employees where English is used for Specific Purposes	64.29	35.71	0.00	0.00
5	Opportunities for higher education: M.Ed in English Language Education	57.14	42.86	0.00	0.00
6	Opportunities for higher education: M.A in Applied Linguistics	50.00	46.43	3.57	0.00
7	Opportunities for higher education: M.A in Translations	50.00	50.00	0.00	0.00
8	Opportunities for higher education: M.A in English Literature	57.14	39.29	3.57	0.00

From the table 4 above, it can be seen that all items get positive responses from the participants. 100% of them agree with the statements given except for statements number 6 and 8. There are fewer alumni who disagree with the opportunities for higher education as M.A in Applied Linguistic and M.A in English Literature. This disagreement relates with the comments given saying it is better just only focus on language education. This is needed to get professional educators.

No	Statements	SA	A	D	SD
1	Graduates of B.Ed in English Language Education can work as teachers or researchers of English Language Education in high schools, colleges, institutes and research centers	60.71	39.29	0.00	0.00
2	Graduates of B.Ed in English Language Education can work as Translators	64.29	35.71	0.00	0.00
3	Graduates of B.Ed in English Language Education can work as Public Relation Employees	71.43	28.57	0.00	0.00
4	Graduates of B.Ed in English Language Education can work as Employees where English is used for Specific Purposes	64.29	35.71	0.00	0.00
5	Opportunities for higher education: M.Ed in English Language Education	57.14	42.86	0.00	0.00
6	Opportunities for higher education: M.A in Applied Linguistics	50.00	46.43	3.57	0.00
7	Opportunities for higher education: M.A in Translations	50.00	50.00	0.00	0.00
8	Opportunities for higher education: M.A in English Literature	57.14	39.29	3.57	0.00

2. Discussion

For the program specification, the item which gets most comments is about the mode of study, type of study, and the maximum study duration. Some alumni showed negative responses through full time study as the mode of study. They said that part-time would give advantages for students who have other jobs outside the campus. According to Yunus et al (2015), who studied the differences between full time and part time students in term of emotional intelligence, well being, and life satisfaction, it was found that there was a significant difference between emotional intelligence and mode of learning, where the part timers seem to be more emotionally intelligent than the full time students. However, the result indicates that the psychological well being and life satisfaction do not show any significant effect on the mode of learning of the respondents. From this finding, it can be seen that both modes of study are not a big matter except in term of students' emotional intelligence.

However, if it is compared with some English Language Teaching Program abroad such as EMU, TED, MEF, and BAU in Turkey, the mode of study for undergraduate program is full-time. It indicates that full time study is good for undergraduate program. The case will be different for Post Graduate Program in which part time study mode is preferred. This is due to the fact that most of them have other business or jobs outside the campus. Berenson et al (2008) stated that majority of the part timer students were on line distance learner as well as mature students. In this sense, age was also correlated with the number of online courses taken by participants. Hence, the older the participants are, the greater their emotional intelligence is.

In addition, because undergraduate program student and the post graduate ones are different in the terms of responsibility they carry outside the campus such as taking care of family, making money, etc. This is in line with the research conducted by Callender (2009) who stated that the reasons for part-time study were financial. The students said they could not afford to give up their job. Family commitments were also very significant especially for lone parents. Nearly 2/3 of the sample found part-time study "more convenient",

especially distance learners, students over 40, and those with dependent children. Part-time provision is thus especially important for those who cannot move away to study either because of employment or family responsibilities.

Moreover, Stratton et al in Callender (2006) also stated that direct financial considerations are paramount in deciding on the mode of study. In a study of a sample of part- and full-time US college enrollers, they found that age and contextual economic factors especially the local unemployment rate rather than cost considerations per se affected the choice of mode of study once the decision to study had been taken. Older students and those in areas with lower rates of unemployment were more likely to decide to study part-time. Women with school age children were slightly more likely to choose full-time study. Thus, from the related research findings above it can be seen that since the majority undergraduate students in this program do not carry those kind of responsibilities, full time seems to be better, but this will be put as consideration.

Next, the item commented is related to the type of study, the alumni said that having online learning can be helpful instead of just focusing on campus-based learning. Online learning will be helpful for students because they also need to explore themselves in term of extracurricular activity. Being full time in campus can be boring for the students. This results in very limited time for students to have extracurricular activity. It is true that online learning is very useful in order to help learners grow outside the campus. However, some things need to be put as consideration. According to Lapsley et al (2008), students need to be prepared in order to get them involved in online learning. This is due to the fact that they may have limited skills in the use of technology. Their previous learning experiences may not have prepared the students to be ready involved in nontraditional teaching. This is due to the fact that the students have been used to the campus-based learning during their elementary and high school learning.

In addition, from a research conducted by Scagnoli (2005), it was found that there are no apparent differences between traditional undergraduate classrooms and online education, at least related to GPA. Scagnoli found that there is no GPA difference between both teaching models. The two types appear to provide students with an equal basis performance on the online threaded discussions and written reports. Moreover, Ya Ni (2013) also stated that if online learning is wanted to be held, in developing online courses, we should realize that some courses may be more challenging to students who persist in the online environment. Course developers of such courses need to carefully analyze what are the specific subjects that may hinder persistence and supplement instruction with face-to-face consulting, advising, or tutoring. Although an online class offers a comparably effective learning alternative, we should recognize that online learning has its unique advantages and disadvantages. Ya Ni (2013) also suggested that in curriculum design, we need to consider how to exploit and integrate the comparative advantages of different types of instruction to specific courses by offering not only fully face-to-face or online but also hybrid classes to overcome the constraints of time, place, and resources.

D. Conclusion

Curriculum needs to be always developed and revised in order to improve the quality of education. In this study, the English Language Teaching curriculum at UNP tried to find the alumni's perception towards one of criteria set by AUN-QA. The criterion is expected learning outcomes. Based on the findings of this research, it can be concluded that the alumni gave positive responses towards program specification of ELT curriculum at UNP. Their perception toward the two aspects related to program specification: program identity and potential careers. Besides, it is suggested that comments given by the alumni can be put as consideration in revising the curriculum. From this study, it is suggested that the criteria discussed in this study (expected learning outcomes) can be examined further by looking at other educational practitioners' perception. Since the criteria or standards set by AUN-QA consist of eleven items, it is suggested that knowing the educational practitioners' perception towards the other criteria can be conducted in order to improve and revise the existed curriculum.

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