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Curriculum Transformation and the Impact to the Implementation in Learning: Lecturers' Perspective

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Abstract

Curriculum transformation in higher education initiate myriad impact for lecturers and learning activities. However, a number of lecturers paid less attention to the programs proposed in the current curriculum. This research aimed at describing the quality of variety of programs which were preceding carried out massively, portraying lecturers' perception toward the implementation of the newest curriculum, and the impact of the implementation of the curriculum to two particular points, learning activities and lecturers' knowledge capacity. The current research was accomplished in a private university named Universitas Islam Malang, Indonesia. A set of questionnaire was provided to 400 lecturers as population of the research. The survey items were constructed by Indonesian Online Learning System. The data analyses were undergone through SPSS 16.0 calculation to be explained descriptively. The finding indicate that few lecturers had inadequate information to the implementation of the newest curriculum. In accordance with the implementation of the curriculum, more than a half of the subjects believed that the programs are capable on improving the learning and lecturers' knowledge capacity.

Keywords: Curriculum Transformation; Lecturers' Perspective; Impact on Learning; Knowledge Capability

Introduction

The recent years, studies on transformation of curriculum as an Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) for early childhood education, for shadow curriculum, in teachers' perspective, in Islamic education, in the changing attitude and barriers solutions, and assessment policy have been carried out all over the world (Govender, 2018; Hendricks & Wangerin, 2017; Kim & Jung, 2019; Mahfud, 2019; Yang & Li, 2019). Planning a curriculum changing must be committed due to ideology of knowledge, education, society, and humanity (Kombe, 2015). Thus, curriculum must respond to the need of the dynamicity of era facilitate children with knowledge, skills and competences needed for tomorrow (Gouëdard et al., 2020). This can be highlighted that as the need of the world change, fundamental factor of learning need to be customized.

The reformation of curriculum has been discussed by researches across continents, in New South Wales (Gowing, 1994), Ghana (Anamuah-Mensah et al., 2007), Greek (Menon et al., 2018), and Taiwan (Chang & Chu, 2009). The concept of curriculum transformation was previously understood by students merely as a sustainable development towards ecofriendly actions (Kagawa, 2007). This shows that the reformation of curriculum is not yet viewed as a link between education and world of works. SD in university environment is difficult to be reached holistically (Sammalisto et al., 2015).

Considering the new environment in education, the present topic was highly necessary to be aroused to scientific research. This research brings the fundamental point of the newest curriculum practice, such as the quality of the implementation of programs before the curriculum was launched, lecturers' perception to the newest curriculum, the impact of the newest curriculum implementation to learning activities, the impact of the newest curriculum to lecturers' capacity improvement. Investigating programs before they are officially launched is crucial since posing unified rules of programs and mechanism need to be strengthen (Parveen & Mirza, 2012). In addition, lecturers' perception to the structure of the newest curriculum need essentially to be portrayed for the newest curriculum undergo innovative and modified educational management (Sedarmayanti, 2002). Meanwhile, investigating the impacts of the present curriculum to implementation and lecturers' capacity improvement are urgently needed in the view of employing interactive learning strategies to stimulate students' involvement and promote the lecturers' engagement of technology (Oviawe, 2020).

Method

This survey research targeted the population all lecturers of Universitas Islam Malang, a private university in Indonesia, from 23 study programs out of 10 faculties. All lecturers were involved in data collection because first, the newest curriculum is implemented wholly to all field of education, second, all lecturers without exception have the same possibility to be students' advisor in the curriculum programs. Taken from Ministry of Education Guideline of the newest curriculum, there are eight programs that can be enrolled by students who at least are in fifth to seventh semester (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2020).

Questionnaire was employed in this research. The questionnaire was developed by Indonesian Online Learning System through Directorate General Higher Education. Since this questionnaire was created in the based of national term, it can be assumed that the survey questions are valid. There are 7 items that are related to the need of discussion of the present research, comprising the quality of programs before the curriculum launched, lecturers' perception to the curriculum optimalization, the impact of the newest curriculum to learning activities, and the impact of the newest curriculum to lecturers' improvement capacity. The questionnaire was delivered to 400 lecturers of Universitas Islam Malang, Indonesia and the data were obtained from 309 lecturers within 5 work day.

SPSS 16.0 was utilized to analyze the data quantitatively in addition to descriptive qualitative analysis. The respondents filled the instrument of the research by choosing the options available in each item.

Findings

The findings of the present research deal with lecturers' discernment to similar learning program before the newest curriculum is executed as well as the number of the credits approval within the program, the lecturers' recognition to the credits equivalence system, the impact of the newest curriculum enactment to learning activities and lecturers' capacity.

The Similar Programs in Previous Curriculum

Before the newest curriculum was launched in 2020, several learning programs which present in today curriculum had been implemented in Universitas Islam Malang, Indonesia. The concept of social services, internship, student exchange, teaching practice, and entrepreneurship are five out of eight programs which had been previously experienced, therefore, lecturers are familiar with the programs.

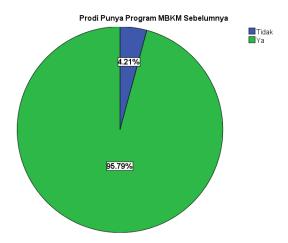


Figure 1. The Lecturers Recognition of Similar Program in Former Curriculum

Figure 1 indicates that 95.79% lecturers seem consciously recognized the programs did exist before the curriculum transformed, while few respondents (4.21%) claim that they did not aware the resemblance agenda of the programs even though the current name are slightly different. The data imply the number of lecturers who could not distinguish the programs are not significant. Respect to this fact, lecturers' apperception towards the presence of agenda before the government introduce the new curriculum was inclusive.

In response to the above finding of lecturers' awareness in identifying curriculum program, it is found that the proportion of the quality implementation was diverged.

	-	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not good	99	32.0	32.0	32.0
	Fairly good	205	66.3	66.3	98.4
	Good	5	1.6	1.6	100.0
	Total	309	100.0	100.0	

Table 1 The Learning Quality of the Programs

Based on the total calculation on this matter, the score of lecturers who said that the implementation of the programs was fairly good is 66.3%. Meanwhile, half of the former data, the score of lecturers who thought the programs enactment need a lot improvement is 32%. Therefore, the rest score to whole data counting 1.6% claimed that the programs were satisfactorily practiced.

Lecturers' Perception to the Mechanism of Credits Equivalence

This section refers to conception of the lecturers in the correspondence credits of the students within the newest curriculum execution. Similar instrument was carried out to obtain the lecturers' perception.

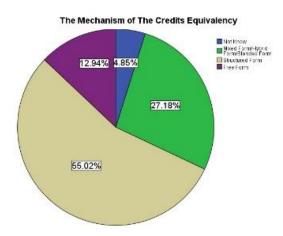


Figure 2. The Mechanism of the Credits Equivalency

Figure 2 reveals that 55.05% of the respondents know that the credits approval for the newest curriculum does have structured mechanism and has been legalized. Whereas, 44.98% of the lecturers failed to acknowledge the presence of the curriculum document. The data imply that the number of lecturers discerning the newest curriculum and that who could not grasp the information are not significant.

In regard of lecturers' perception on the mechanism of credits equivalency, the institution has constructed the guideline of credits equivalency as well as legalized by the stakeholders.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not know	12	3.9	3.9	3.9
	There is no parameter	4	1.3	1.3	5.2
	In the form of draft	41	13.3	13.3	18.4
	The parameter has been issued	252	81.6	81.6	100.0
	Total	309	100.0	100.0	

Table 3. The Presence of The Newest Curriculum Equivalency Parameter

Based on the data calculation through questionnaire item comprising four options, it is revealed that almost all lecturers (94.82%) spotted that the parameter has been constructed, but within the percentage, few of them (13.27%) claimed that the parameter is in the form of draft, and most lecturers (81.55%) caught the idea that it has been physically and officially issued. Meanwhile, it is interesting that, in fact, 3.88% of the respondents do not realize if the credits equivalency exists or not and even 1.29% of the respondent claimed that there is no equivalency parameter at all.

In regard to the number of credits approved to a program accomplished, lecturers have different predicted estimation.

Table 2. The Number of Credits Approval

	-	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not know	17	5.5	5.5	5.5
	51-60 credits	29	9.4	9.4	14.9
	41-50 credits	2	.6	.6	15.5
	31-40 credits	20	6.5	6.5	22.0
	21-30 credits	16	5.2	5.2	27.2
	10-20 credits	198	64.1	64.1	91.3
	Less than 10 credits	27	8.7	8.7	100.0
	Total	309	100.0	100.0	

The first position is occupied 64.08% responses that 10-20 credits will be approved. Meanwhile, the percentage of respondents who assume the credits approved were varied. The score of assumption of the credits approved less than 10 credits, 21-30 credits, 31-40 credits, 41-50 credits, and 51-60 credits are 8.74%, 5.18%, 6.47%, 0.65%, 9.39%, respectively. In the meantime, 5.50% lecturer claimed completely uncomprehend the total credits which can be approved.

The Curriculum Impact to Learning

Dealing with the lecturers' perception of the impact of the newest curriculum, the data calculation is differed in to categories, namely the impact to learning activities and the impact to lecturers' capacity. Table 4 reveals the curriculum impact to learning activities. Table 5 presents the curriculum impact to lecturers' capacity.

Table 4. The Impact of the Curriculum to Learning Activities

-	-	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No improvement at all	1	.3	.3	.3
	Insignificant improvement	14	4.5	4.5	4.9
	Sufficient improvement	124	40.1	40.1	45.0
	Significant improvement	113	36.6	36.6	81.6
	Very significant improvement	57	18.4	18.4	100.0
	Total	309	100.0	100.0	

Table 5. The Impact of the Curriculum to Lecturers' Capacity

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		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No improvement at all	3	1.0	1.0	1.0
	Insignificant improvement	10	3.2	3.2	4.2
	Sufficient improvement	113	36.6	36.6	40.8
	Significant improvement	118	38.2	38.2	79.0
	Very significant improvement	65	21.0	21.0	100.0
	Total	309	100.0	100.0	

Based on the finding in Table 4, it indicates that 40.1% of lecturers affirm that the curriculum contributes to sufficient improvement to learning activities, while almost the same response by 36.6% of lecturers answer that the newest curriculum bear upon significant improvement to learning activities, and 18.4% lecturers mention that the learning activities improve very significantly. Meanwhile, there are also lecturer who witness that the newest curriculum creates insignificant improvement and even no improvement at all as much as 4.5% and 0.3%, respectively.

In Table 5, all attributes refer to the learning activities as the result of the newest curriculum implementation. Out of 309 respondents, 38.2% state that the lecturers' capacity improve significantly, while in the second place as much as 36.6% respondents perceive sufficient improvement of lecturers' capacity. The next scores are placed by option very significant improvement, that is 21%, insignificant improvement of lecturers' capacity (3.2%), and the last is scored 1% as the respondents claim there is no lecturers' capacity improvement at all.

Discussions

The present research requested to portray lecturers' recognition of similar programs in former curriculum before Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia launched the newest curriculum named Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) also known as link and match curriculum as well as the quality of programs, lecturers' perception to the mechanism of credits equivalency and lecturers' perception on the number of credits that can be approved by the university. In addition, this research also seeks the impacts of the newest curriculum to two sectors, learning activities and lecturers' capacity. Concerning the first matter, compare to those who claimed there is no similar programs between former curriculum to the present curriculum, most lecturers clearly experience the similar programs. This is rational since almost all universities in Indonesia perform internship, student exchange, social services, and entrepreneurship programs. As for pre service teacher, before graduating, they experience teaching practice subjects in two consecutive semesters, which demand them to enroll in a real formal education institution, ranging junior high school to senior high school. This suggests that providing opportunity to real world of work for university students has been considered remarkably important and can eliminate the gap between classroom input and real time application instead of feeding them with lecturing activity per se (Chang & Chu, 2009b; Khalil, 2015). This finding validates a theory that the inclusion of working experience for tertiary level students need to be strengthen through on-the-job education program (Atkinson, 2016).

Supporting the need of link and match program between education and world of work, this finding also discovers the implementation quality. Even though the number of lecturers who claim the programs were carried out well towering, interestingly there are one third of the whole lecturers judging that the implementation of the program is not good. Producing feedbacks for learning program engaging world of work need more attention in higher education curriculum (Nicol et al., 2014) since a successful performance of link and match programs must combine three fundamental sectors the university, the world of work, and the government (Suyitno, 2021). An education institution needs to provide the field of study that consistence with the world of work (Azman et al., 2020; Walters, 2004). Therefore, information dissemination of the programs needs to be carried out extensively to more lecturers and students through workshops and conferences to reduce the programs misconception. The concept of link and match program proposed by the government is still a new challenge for lecturers and students (Muhajir et al., 2021).

The next result deals with lecturers' perception to credits equivalency mechanism. There is significant gap between lecturers who recognize the presence of credits equivalency parameter document of the newest curriculum in the university and those who clueless. Based on the finding, it can be interpreted that lecturers' perceptions of equivalency mechanism and the number of credits approval are respectable but cannot be stated as excellent understanding of the concept. The deficient information is might be caused by insufficient information obtained through online platform due to lack of internet

access. As the present curriculum born in the middle of Covid-19 Pandemic era where many aspects of life are undergone through digital media, the demand of internet connection has changed from amenity to necessity. This finding verifies that digital spaces are massively utilized to replace the oldest way of social interaction. This finding verifies (Beaunoyer et al., 2020); Moreover, internet connection becomes the prominent factor in education (Rafiq et al., 2021) and is employed to disseminate information (Zuo & Miller Juvé, 2021).

Lecturers' perception to credits equivalency mechanism is closely related to the number of credits approval. Various responses were found to this question item of how many credits approved in the present new curriculum are. Based on the guideline book of the newest curriculum issued by Ministry of Education and Culture (2020) it is lucidly acknowledged that in one semester (six-month learning), students can enroll or take subjects of learning outside the study program they are registered previously in another study program within one institution as many as 20 credits. Whereas, students have an opportunity to learn in different study program for three semesters. Meanwhile, if the students are keen on participating in a different institution with the same study program, they can take at most 40 credits in no more than 2 semesters. Therefore, it implies that there is a misunderstanding of the given question since there is no exact information related to the length of the semester. The misconception of credits equivalency also happened in research by (Ryan et al., 2018) in regards to the compatibility and feasibility of two credits equivalency system (ECVET and ECTS). However, the existence of credits equivalency practice needs to be campaigned because credits equivalency is a prominent predictor of overall academic achievement (Grimes et al., 2013).

The Impact of the Newest Curriculum

The present curriculum which was launched in 2020 is claimed affect to two different aspects of education, namely learning activities and lecturers' capacity.

a. Learning Activities

The former aspect finding indicates that the newest curriculum contributes positive impact. However, most lecturers chose that the learning activities improvement is in the level of moderate, neither too substantial nor ghastly. It implies that the curriculum programs have appropriately been spread out to all aspects of the university stakeholders (lecturers and students) and properly applied in the learning. The learning activities during the implementation of the newest curriculum are carried out through initial learning activities and other eight programs proposed by the government, viz. internship, students exchange, teaching practice, social services, entrepreneurship, research, humanity project, and independent project. Six programs have been carried out even before the curriculum was launched in 2020 by the government. Yet, the last two programs are still going to be implemented in 2021. The execution of three out of six programs has been undertaken by a special needs student and resulting outstanding achievement (Prasetyoningsih et al., in press.). Furthermore, this curriculum provides rooms for students to improve their soft skills and hard skills through more menu courses that give them freedom to choose (Krishnapatria, 2021). Meanwhile, learning activities under research, humanity project, and independent project programs are not comprehensible as the other five programs. The trend of humanity project in learning program is found in the context of overseas education, such as in North Carolina, USA (Cho et al., 2015) where the activities were conducted by preservice teachers through humanity centered design and community-based learning, in Ohio, USA (Lawless Frank & Bogard, 2021) where the activity was also carried out by preservice teachers to provide cultural development experiences. Meanwhile independent project learning was practiced by arousing students' anxieties about independence work through collaborative learning (Hugh-Jones & Madill, 2008). Therefore, more information and best practices of the two programs is required.

b. Lecturers' Capacity

The latter aspect finding that the current new curriculum resulting positive impact. Most lecturers witness the positive improvement of lecturers' capacity in different level, though still few lecturers claim that the lecturers' capacity improve insignificantly and failed to notice the improvement at all. This implies that the lecturers' capacity improvement recognition determines the lecturers' viewpoint towards the current curriculum. In addition, the finding suggests that the lecturers acknowledge that the newest curriculum has a high probability in increasing their potential. (Sulaiman, 2021), for example, felt the benefit of the newest curriculum through internship program through which she had valuable opportunity to prove that a lecturer can collaborate with private sector in improving the quality of television program. Besides, the more free-to-choose programs offered in this curriculum, it needs relevant stakeholders to support the implementation, otherwise, it will only cause new problems (Prahani et al., 2020).

Conclusion and Recommendation

Curriculum transformation issue has become the center of attention for education since it is newly projected by the government through Ministry of Education and Culture, Indonesia. This research highlights the urgent need of solving the challenges and the chances of the new curriculum by managing holistic dissemination program to every corner of education institution in this country to avoid misunderstanding. Besides, providing flawless instruction on how to deal with this curriculum is required. This research data was obtained merely from the perspective of lecturers. Thus, it is suggested that succeeding researches on the same topic of discussion involve other viewpoints to provide more comprehensible information of the curriculum reformation. This research was conducted in a private university context in Indonesia; thus some terms might be different from other countries. Research from other countries and public university in Indonesia might become best practices to be referred.

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