Scores in Final Exams of Students Who were Attend in Face to Face Tutorials were Lower than Those Who Do Not Attend

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses the influence of face-to-face tutorials on the students' ability to answer their exams at an open and distance learning university in Indonesia. Population was comprised of students from non-education Faculties who Bandung, Jakarta and Serang in the first semester of 2011. Students in face to face tutorials in classes of 10 were sampled. Scores in final exams from the students in face to face tutorials and students not in face to face tutorials were then compared. The findings show that exam scores of students who attended face to face tutorials were lower than those who did not attend them. This suggests that something might be wrong in the face-to-face tutorial. The policy on face to face tutorials could also be blamed as the cause of that finding. From 99 courses, there was no single course where participants in face to face tutorials had higher mean score in final exam than those who were not in. Seven courses did not show significant means differences in final exam. For 92 courses, the mean scores of final exam from those who attended face to face tutorial were significantly lower than those who did not. Problem could be in the tutorial process. How do students complete their course assignments? Do they work together? There could be a problem in face-to-face tutorials that discourages students to study hard. The ODL university needs to evaluate its policy and processes of the face to face tutorial..

***Keywords**: Face-to-face tutorials, scores in face to face tutorials, scores in final test, university policy.*

INTRODUCTION

Learning or studying is an activity that should be done by students or persons who are involved in schools and universities. A set of courses in a curriculum should be completed and mastered by the students. One indicator that shows their success in mastering courses is their grades (Crocker & Algina, 1986). According to Wickham (2008) the more

diligent the students the better their grades. Studying in class is not everything. The students should learn much more outside of class. By definition, in a one-credit course, students should attend a face to face class with the lecturer for one hour per week. But students should also learn for two hours per week, preparing for class and revising. In other words, students need to spend more time to study outside of class.

Open and distance learning (ODL) takes place when there is physical distance between the students and the lecturers (Bufford, 2005). Usually the students and lecturers are in different places whereby they are not in the same physical space during the teaching and learning process. The Indonesian government has permitted a few universities to establish programs that offer ODL. Students in one of these universities were selected to be the sample in this study.

Theoretically, ODL students should prepare for three hours per week before class for a one-credit course. ODL Students will respond to written materials either in printed form or in electronic form. The contents should be easy to be read and understood. Without much help from the lecturer or tutor, students should be able to learn those materials independently.

As an ODL institution, the university also offers face to face tutorials to its students. Scores obtained in an online tutorial will contribute 30% to the final score. Meanwhile, scores obtained in the face to face tutorial will contribute 50% to the final score. In the case that student takes both kinds of tutorials, the biggest contribution of one tutorial will be taken. Students who do not attend tutorials at all will receive scores purely from final exams. In this article, the focus is only on the face to face tutorial and concerned with the impact of face to face tutorial on the students' scores in their final examination

TUTORIALS

Unlike face to face universities, students in ODL generally learn using modules. For this reason, the modules should be self-contained for self-instruction. The modules are usually completed with additional non-printed materials in the form of CD, VCD or web supplement. Students can learn independently or in groups (Buford, 2005). Many ODL institutions do not have enough lecturers to teach their students and usually outsource eligible lecturers from other institutions. There are eight face to face activities under tutor supervision in the class per academic semester. These activities consist of presentations and class discussions where the topics are given by the tutors. To gain scores in class discussions, students must participate. Tutors will then record the students' responses as assessment. There are also three assignments that must be completed. These assignments are similar to the tests but students have only an hour to answer the questions.

Face to face tutorials in ODL universities are almost similar to the face to face activities in other universities. In class, tutors explain concepts, ask some questions, create discussions, and give assignments. However, not every topic in the modules can be covered in face to face tutorials. In conventional universities, students meet with their tutor in class on an average of 16 times in a semester. In face to face tutorials at an ODL institution, the number of meetings is only eight times, including the three assignments. Each meeting in face to face tutorials is two hours long and each assignment requires one hour. Since there are only eight meetings, tutors need to provide students with selected

materials in advance. Tutors need to manage that limited time to reach optimum result in tutorials. Therefore, tutors need to have good communication skills and a good mastery of the course since they need to explain difficult content to the students.

Tutors also need to have the ability to motivate the students. As adults, the students should able to motivate themselves to learn. However, since most are fully-employed, tutors still need to remind them that they must prepare before sitting for an exam. Even though the students are mature, but as working people it is not easy to switch between the working climate to the learning climate (Nonis & Hudson, 2006). Synergy between tutors and students is important. Tutors teach course materials that are assumed to be difficult by the students. Regardless, students need to study hard in order to master the courses. Students have to manage their time to accommodate as much time for learning as possible. Without studying hard, their final scores will be low.

METHODS

The research was conducted in the first semester of the 2011 academic year. The population of this study comprised of all students who registered in 2011 at one ODL University in Indonesia in Jakarta, Bandung and Serang. There are four Faculties in this University: Faculty of Education, Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, Faculty of Economic, and Faculty of Politics and Social Sciences.

Students in Faculty of Education are teachers who mostly teach in elementary schools. This Faculty has the largest number of ODL students. It is assumed that these students know the methods of learning. Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences has the smallest number of the ODL students. It is hard to find tutorials with more than 10 students. Faculty Economics and Faculty of Politics and Social Sciences also have a small number of the students. Therefore, only courses from study programs in Faculty of Economics and Faculty of Politics and Social Science were taken in this study.

There were 218 courses that offered face to face tutorials at that time. However, only 99 courses were chosen in this study, because there were at least 10 students who were involved in face to face tutorials. Students' means scores in final exams were compared between those who were in face to face tutorials and those who were not. Scores from the final exam were taken from the university's database. According to the central limit theorem, the means value from any distribution is normally distributed (Hoog and Craig, 1978). Therefore, the t-test was used in comparing the mean scores from the two groups.

RESULTS

Table 1: Students' Scores in Face to Face Tutorial for 99 Courses

Scores in	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
F2F Tutorials	3.00	100.00	80.621	12.65465

Table 1 shows the descriptive scores of face to face tutorials for 99 courses. Students mean scores in face to face tutorial were quite high. Even though some students got lower scores, 85% of their scores were above 70.00 (see Table 3).

Table 2: Students Means Scores in Final Exams for 99 Courses

	Status	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
Final Exam Scores	Not in F2F tutorial	7940	54.759	8.064
	In F2F tutorial	10214	43.860	11.901

Mean scores in final exam for 99 courses from those who were not in and those who were in face to face tutorials are showed in Table 2. The difference between their mean scores was almost 11.00. This discrepancy is significant. In addition, standard deviation of final exam scores from those who were in face to face tutorials was also higher. This means that the distributions of scores in final test from the students in face to face tutorials were wider.

Table 3: Distribution of Students' Scores Who Attended Face to Face Tutorials for 99 Courses

Scores in F2F Tutorial	Frequency	%	Scores in Final Exam			
			Min	Max	$\bar{X}$	SD
1. 00<F2F<=10	9	.1	22	48	37.507	10.421
2. 10<F2F<=20	44	.4	13.33	71.11	38.129	12.029
3. 20<F2F<=30	68	.7	13.33	78.00	45.921	14.671
4. 30<F2F<=40	62	.6	16.00	68.89	43,771	13.102
5. 40<F2F<=50	75	.7	12.00	90.00	38.069	11.860
6. 50<F2F<=60	240	2.3	18.00	82.00	41.059	10.808
7. 60<F2F<=70	1032	10.1	14.00	88.00	42.239	10.979
8. 70<F2F<=80	2659	26.0	14.00	88.00	44.236	11.358
9. 80<F2F<=90	3708	36.3	11.11	86.00	45.343	12.064
10. 90<F2F<=100	2317	22.7	10.00	86.67	42.331	12.230
Total	**10214**	**100.0**				

95.1% of the students' scores were above 60.00. It can be seen from Table 3 that only 4.9% of scores were below 60.00. Usually, students with scores lower than 60 were the students who did not attend face to face tutorials. They could be absent from some of face to face tutorials, or they did not finish the assignments in the class. Students' means scores in final exams from those who attended face to face tutorials were not higher than those who did not attend them. Only six courses had statistically equal means scores. For the rest of the 93 courses, students' scores in final exams from those who attended face to face tutorials were lower than those who did not attend them.

DISCUSSION

With the assumption that students who attended face to face tutorials will study more than students who did not attend, final test scores of those who attend face to face tutorials should be higher than those who do not. However, in this study that assumption was completely challenged. Finding showed that scores in final test for those who attend face to face tutorials was lower than those who do not. The question is why? The simplest answer is "students who were in face to face tutorials did not study as hard as

those who were not in face to face tutorial". The next question is also why? To pass the course, students need to have score of ≥ 55.00. For 85% of the students in face to face tutorials, to reach the final score of 55.00, they only need to have scores of 40 or less in final test. If these students were satisfied just to pass the course, those scores in final test was more than enough.

There was nothing wrong with these students' behavior. Their target probably is only to pass the course. Since the contribution of face to face tutorials to the final score is 50%, they could use this opportunity to reach the minimum criteria of the passing grade. It seems that it is not too difficult to reach high score in the face to face tutorial. However, these students did not reach high score in final exams. These students were not interested in reaching high scores. There are many questions that need to be answered from this finding. What do students do in face to face tutorials? What was wrong in the face to face tutorial process that could not encourage the students to study hard? Does the ODL university need to have another policy to encourage the students to study harder?

According to Koriat and Nussinson (2009), self learning is only effective if it is monitored. Monitoring students' learning is important to evaluate their mastery of the course. Monitoring and controlling the process that occur during learning process may be conceptualized as involving the operation of meta-level processes (Nelson & Narens, 1990). The operation of meta-level processes oversee object-level operations (monitoring) and return the signal to regulate this operation in a top-down fashion (control). This framework used the assumption that monitoring is driving and guiding control operations. As an example, self-learning students are assumed to monitor the degrees of their own course content mastery. The effort to study the course content will be stopped whenever the desired level of mastery is already reached (Dunlosky & Hertzog, 1998).

The model of monitoring-control (MC) is assumed to underlie a meta-cognitive regulation. In addition to the MC model, Koriat, Ma' ayan, & Nussinson (2006) introduced the control-monitoring (CM) model. They argued that meta-cognitive monitoring guides behavior. But sometimes monitoring itself is based on the feedback from control operation. As an example, a strong feeling of knowing during the attempt to retrieve information from memory may motivate increased effort to search for the elusive target. That feeling may itself be based on feedback from attempting to search for the target-the accessibility of partial information following initial search (Koriat, 1995; Koriat & Levy-Sadot, 2001).

From these two models, it seems that MC model is the closest to the phenomena in which students will stop studying when they know that they will pass the course. Students stopped or decreased their effort in studying the moment they know that their score in the face to face tutorials was already high (Dunlosky and Hertzog, 1998). Motivation affects the students' effort in reaching the good grade. According to Pintrich & Schunk (1996), motivation will influence how and why people learn, and how they will perform. Motivation was found to be the best predictor of students' achievement (Oxford, Park-Oh, Ito, & Sumrall, 1993a, 1993b). Another study also found that motivation and attitude were the best predictors of students' grade point average (Hendrickson, 1997). It seems that tutors have not succeeded in motivating the students to study harder.

According to Deci, Ryan & Williams (1996) and Sheldon & Biddle (1998) students vary in their engagement and their enthusiasm for schoolwork. They also vary in the degree to which they go on to demonstrate lifelong interest in education and learning. Self

determination theory (SDT) suggests these differences by focusing on the content of the goals that people have for learning and the learning context within which the goals are pursued (Deci, Ryan, & Williams 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Within SDT, learning is an active process that functions optimally when students' motivation is high for engaging in learning activities and assimilating new information (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

A research has examined qualities of the social context that undermine autonomous motivation and that facilitate autonomous motivation. Social context that control what people should do (such as pressuring people through use of incentives, deadlines, and punishments or through reliance on instructions) have been found to diminish autonomous motivation (Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 1999). These have found to result in decreased persistence and poorer learning, especially conceptual learning which requires deep processing of information (Grolnick & Ryan, 1987). Conversely, environment that support autonomy have been found to enhance autonomous motivation and facilitate learning, test performance, and adjustment (Black & Deci, 2000; Ryan & Connell, 1989). As an open and distance learning institution, the university offers its students freedom to study anytime that suits them, whenever they want, following their respective learning styles. Unfortunately, many do not take that opportunity. Therefore, the learning materials which they were mastered was not enough to cover the materials in final exam. As a consequence, many scored poorly in the final exam.

According to Nonis & Hudson (2006) students spend less time in studying and more time in working is are two trends that all colleges and universities deal with. Lowering academic standards by minimizing effort and by expecting lower achievement is a short-time strategy. Students who do not attend face to face tutorials learned independently using modules. The modules were developed by experts to be self-contain and self-instruction.

CONCLUSSION

There are possible reasons to explain low final test scores of students who attend face to face tutorials. First possibility is students were already satisfied with the score from face to face tutorials. They did not need a high score in the final test in order to pass the course. Their target is only passing the course. They also did not have high motivation in having an A or even a B. Theory of Monitoring-control (MC) seem to describe this situation. Students will decrease their effort to study for the final exam, since they know that they already have high score in the face to face tutorial. Another possibility is because the requirements in the face to face tutorials do not encourage the students to study harder. Tutors could not motivate the students to study harder in preparing for final exams.

In contrast, students who did not attend face to face tutorials had significantly higher score in final exam as they relied on their modules to learn. This suggests that the content in the modules is not difficult to be understood. Furthermore, they studied harder than the students who attended face to face tutorials. Since they study mostly from modules, therefore, the modules are really standalone, self-instructional and not too difficult to be studied. It is suggested that the university needs to revise its policy on the 50% of scores in face to face tutorials that contribute to the final score. This policy does not motivate the students to learn properly, to revise in preparation of the final tests. The university can also introduce a new policy that the students should attain a certain score in final exam in order to use their scores in face to face tutorials.

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