Embracing E-Learning for Enhanced Learning Experiences in the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Palangka Raya

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Abstract: Community service, one of the main tasks according to Tridharma (the three pillars of higher education), was carried out to optimize e-learning in the learning process for lecturers and students of the Faculty of Economics and Business (FEB), Universitas Palangka Raya (UPR). The issue being discussed was e-learning not being optimally used in FEB due to lecturers’ and students’ perceptions that e-learning was not a user-friendly platform. Hence to solve this problem, several implementation methods were being used, which were online and offline coaching clinics on the use of e-learning for lecturers, e-learning workshops for students, preparation of effective guidance modules, and creation of e-learning Standard Operating Procedures (SOP). The result after implementing the community service activities showed that the perceptions about e-learning were resolved after attending the community service activities which resulted in the growth of users from the lecturers and students.

Keywords: coaching clinic, workshop, e-learning.

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INTRODUCTION

The field of education is rapidly evolving, and one notable development is the increasing diversity of learning methods, including the use of e-Learning technology. E-Learning is an educational innovation that transforms offline learning into an online platform, enabling educators to engage with students without being limited by space and time constraints. The concept of e-Learning first emerged in 1990 at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, United States, with the introduction of a computer technology called PLATO. Since then, e-Learning has undergone continuous rapid development in tandem with technological advancements (Ramli, 2022).

E-Learning utilizes electronic media to facilitate learning without the need for physical interaction, making it accessible from anywhere. Its benefits include interactivity, independence, accessibility, adaptivity, and enrichment in the learning process (Sati et al., 2022). Essentially, e-Learning can be categorized into two types: synchronous and asynchronous. Synchronous e-Learning refers to real-time learning where interactions occur simultaneously between instructors and students, enabling direct online engagement. On the other hand, asynchronous e-Learning allows students to access learning materials at their own pace and convenience, without being restricted to a specific schedule. This flexibility makes asynchronous learning popular in e-Learning as it provides students with the freedom to learn and complete tasks within a predetermined timeframe. Learning materials in e-Learning can take various forms, including readings, animations, simulations, educational games, tests, quizzes, and assignments.

Numerous studies have explored the benefits of e-Learning in the learning process. It has been found to promote student independence, foster teacher creativity in collaborative learning environments (Ramli, 2022), and significantly enhance student achievement and motivation (Hoerunnisa et al., 2019). However, challenges arise when students need to adapt to this new teaching method, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic (Amir et al., 2020). Mukhtar et al. (2020) support the use of online learning in the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry, stating that e-Learning offers advantages such as encouragement for students and manageability.

While e-Learning presents a promising opportunity to continue education during the COVID-19 pandemic, it may not be fully effective in developing countries like Nepal, where internet quality and frequent power outages pose challenges (Subedi et al., 2020). Similarly, in Pakistan, technical and financial constraints limit students' access to the internet (Adnan & Anwar, 2020). These issues in developing countries stem from the underdeveloped technology infrastructure and the challenges of transitioning from offline to online learning (Obeidat et al., 2020).

The success of e-Learning depends on several factors, including technology knowledge, management support, student awareness, high-quality information from faculty and universities, and environmental factors (Alqahtani & Rajkhan, 2020; Shahzad et al., 2021), and environmental factors (Panigrahi et al., 2021). It is crucial to consider these factors as e-Learning cannot be fully optimized if the necessary preparations are not in place, leading to obstacles such as inaccessible assignments, limited access to smartphones, and restricted network connectivity (Alim et al., 2019). Additionally, e-Learning can be effective but inefficient due to its higher cost compared to traditional offline classes (Bahasoan et al., 2020).

A great number of universities in Indonesia have utilized e-Learning in their education system, particularly when the COVID-19 pandemic started its impact in early 2020 (Jovanka et al., 2023; Thamrin et al., 2023). The pandemic triggered the world of education to apply e-Learning as a primary learning medium to carry out the learning process so the goals of education are still achieved amidst limited face-to-face meetings in the era of the pandemic (Pangarso & Setyorini, 2023). One of the universities that have developed e-Learning in their education system is the Universitas Palangka Raya (UPR), which resided in Central Kalimantan, Indonesia.

E-Learning was utilized by UPR to adapt to the pandemic. The presence of e-Learning is proven to be an innovative learning tool in which students and lecturers are not required to meet face to face, but can still carry out the learning process online, organized by provided features of said e-Learning technology. Until 2022, the participation level of lecturers and students in the usage of e-Learning at the Faculty of Economics and Business (FEB) UPR is still relatively low. Based on the data obtained from the e-learning.upr.ac.id site in August 2022, only five lecturers from the Department of Economics Development were using UPR e-Learning in their lecture process. This shows that the use of e-Learning has not been optimally utilized in the university’s education system. A further survey was conducted online for lecturers and students majoring in Economic Development on July 19, 2022. The result showed that among the twenty-eight respondents who
filled out the questionnaire, more than 70% said they had not used UPR e-Learning.

Given this situation, it is essential to provide comprehensive support and guidelines for utilizing e-Learning as an innovative learning medium. To address this, the authors propose conducting in-depth assistance using the Root Cause Analysis (RCA) method. RCA is a structured approach that identifies factors influencing past events, aiming to improve performance (Corcoran, 2004). RCA assists individuals and groups in identifying the root causes of problems, using a simple yet effective method to analyze system failures and identify causes and effects (Doggett, 2005). In this analysis, the RCA approach is applied using the 5 Whys technique, which involves asking multiple “why” questions to uncover the underlying causes of suboptimal e-Learning utilization. The absence of guidelines and the lack of user-friendly technology were identified as the root causes of the problem.

To address these challenges, the authors propose community service activities such as an e-Learning Coaching Clinic for lecturers, e-Learning workshops for students, the development of e-Learning Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), and the creation of e-Learning usage guidelines for lecturers and students at FEB UPR. These interventions aim to enhance the knowledge and skills of participants in utilizing e-Learning effectively and establish a structured framework to ensure consistency and improve the overall e-Learning experience.

E-Learning has become an integral part of the education system, offering new opportunities and challenges. It is crucial to address the factors hindering the optimal utilization of e-Learning, such as the absence of guidelines and user-friendly technology. Through community service activities and the development of SOPs and guidelines, the aim is to improve the utilization of e-Learning, thereby enhancing the learning experience for lecturers and students at FEB UPR. This research contributes to advancing e-Learning practices and improving the quality of education, not only at FEB UPR but also beyond.

This study offers several novel contributions compared to previous research. First, it provides an updated examination of the current state of e-Learning in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, specifically focusing on the utilization of e-Learning at the Universitas Palangka Raya (UPR) in Central Kalimantan, Indonesia. While prior studies have explored the benefits and challenges of e-Learning in various settings, this research sheds light on the specific implementation and adoption of e-Learning within the UPR community.

Furthermore, this study employs the Root Cause Analysis (RCA) method to identify the underlying factors that hinder the optimal utilization of e-Learning at UPR. The utilization of RCA, particularly through the 5 Whys technique, provides a systematic and structured approach to uncovering the root causes of the problem. By applying this method, the research contributes to the field by offering a practical and effective approach to analyzing and addressing the challenges associated with e-Learning implementation.

Additionally, this study proposes community service activities, such as the e-Learning Coaching Clinic for lecturers and e-Learning workshops for students. These interventions aim to provide in-depth assistance and support for utilizing e-Learning effectively. By offering specific recommendations tailored to the UPR context, this research goes beyond general discussions on the benefits and challenges of e-Learning and provides actionable solutions to enhance the utilization of e-Learning at the university.

Moreover, this study emphasizes the need for the development of e-Learning Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) and guidelines for lecturers and students. By proposing the creation of these resources, the research addresses a crucial aspect of e-Learning implementation – the establishment of a structured framework and guidelines to ensure consistency and improve the overall e-Learning experience. This contribution is significant as it provides practical guidance to educators and students in effectively navigating the e-Learning environment.

The following section will go over strategies for implementing community service offered to overcome learning problems through e-learning. Only then does this paper discuss the outcomes and discussion of the community service that has been completed. This paper concludes with a summary and future implications.

METHOD

The community service initiative incorporates a combination of online and offline methods, including lectures, tutorials, and discussions, to ensure the smooth execution of activities involving lecturers and students. The implementation strategies encompass several key step:

1. Collaboration with the Deputy Dean for Academic Affairs and the Deputy Dean for Student Affairs to plan and execute the Community Service activities in the Coaching Clinic, Workshops, development of Standard
Operating Procedures (SOPs), and the creation of guidelines for both lecturers and students. This coordination with the Deputy Deans provided valuable insights and guidance for the preparation of the community service program.

2. Development of an e-Learning guidelines module, which offers comprehensive instructions on creating LMS (Learning Management System) accounts and utilizing the platform effectively.

3. Compilation of e-Learning SOPs, which serve as a standardized framework established by UPR to ensure the successful delivery of quality outputs.

4. Dissemination of invitations and activity posters to lecturers and students within the faculty. This step involved obtaining necessary permissions from the Dean and Deputy Dean to proceed with the activities.

5. Provision of essential resources such as laptops, internet connectivity, and a dedicated room for the team to facilitate the execution of the community service activities. FEB UPR demonstrated support by providing the necessary resources to ensure the successful implementation of the services.

6. Conducting online e-Learning clinic coaching activities through platforms like Zoom, as well as offline sessions for lecturers held in a designated room prepared by the research team. During these sessions, knowledge sharing took place regarding education in the modern era, LMS usage, and effective utilization of the platform.

7. Facilitating online e-Learning workshops for the students, where they were educated on LMS functionality and how to effectively navigate and utilize the platform.

8. Documenting the administrative aspects of the activities to maintain accountability. This involved recording the Zoom meetings, capturing pictures, and keeping detailed records of the proceedings.

9. Performing post-community service activity evaluations to assess the impact and effectiveness of the initiatives. The evaluation aimed to gauge the significance of the community service activities and determine any improvements or adjustments that may be required.

In addition to these steps, the authors distributed questionnaires before and after the community service activities to analyze the perceived benefits resulting from the implementation of these initiatives. The estimated duration for carrying out this service was approximately 20 days, combining online and offline components.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results
The e-Learning approach utilized by UPR is based on Moodle (Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment), an open-source Learning Management System (LMS) accessible at https://e-learning.upr.ac.id/. This method reflects UPR's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which necessitated the shift to online teaching and learning. Mukhtar et al. (2020) have supported the use of e-learning during the pandemic to facilitate student engagement.

Figure 1. UPR e-Learning Cover Page

The service activities encompass both online and offline approaches and took place from August 15th to September 3rd, 2022. They were attended by lecturers and students from the Department of Economic Development, Management, and Accounting. The activities included:

A. Coaching Clinic for Lecturers

Garad et al. (2021) have emphasized the need for financial support and university-led initiatives such as workshops, training, and teleconference applications to enhance e-learning effectiveness. A survey conducted prior to the Coaching Clinic revealed that out of the 35 participating lecturers attending virtually, 51.4% had an e-Learning account, while the remaining 48.6% did not. This suggests uneven familiarity with UPR's e-Learning platform. The Coaching Clinic for Lecturers was attended by 35 lecturers in the online session and 7 lecturers in the offline session. It covered various topics, including:

1. Assisting lecturers with new account registration on https://e-learning.upr.ac.id/;
2. Guiding lecturers through the account activation process using the faculty representative's super admin e-Learning account;
3. Demonstrating how to create online classes, provide materials, distribute assignments, and utilize other support features on the site;
4. Distributing simplified e-Learning usage guide modules for lecturers and students;
5. Providing SOPs (Standard Operating Procedures) on e-Learning guidelines for lecturers;
6. Offering a Call Center for lecturers seeking consultation regarding e-Learning challenges.

The Coaching Clinic activities, conducted both online and offline, aimed to provide technical assistance to lecturers in navigating UPR's e-Learning platform. Offline sessions were held in a dedicated room prepared by the research team.

B. E-Learning Workshop for Students

According to Alim et al. (2019), one of the challenges faced by students in using e-learning applications is the accessibility of assignments. To address this, workshops were conducted to educate students about e-learning. The survey conducted before the workshop revealed that 50% of the students had used e-Learning, while the other 50% had not. This indicates that e-Learning had not been fully adopted by all students in the Department of Economic Development, Management, and Accounting. The workshop guided students in creating e-Learning accounts and encouraged them to consult the research team for any difficulties encountered.

The E-Learning Workshop was attended by 66 students and covered several topics, including:
1. Assisting students with new account registration on https://e-learning.upr.ac.id/;
2. Guiding students on accessing virtual classes, submitting assignments, and accessing course materials provided by lecturers through e-Learning;
3. Distributing a simplified e-Learning usage guide module for students;
4. Providing SOPs for e-Learning usage by students;
5. Offering a Call Center for students seeking consultation regarding e-Learning challenges.

In addition to student training, participating students were encouraged to assist their peers who were unable to attend the workshop sessions. The research team developed a Guidance Module on e-Learning usage and SOPs as a reference for implementing e-Learning in educational practices at UPR's Faculty of Economics and Business (FEB).

C. Preparation of the e-Learning Guide Module

The preparation of e-Learning modules aimed to provide practical and simplified guides for both lecturers and students. The modules served as a valuable resource to facilitate the use of e-Learning in educational practices at UPR's FEB. The SOPs were developed to establish a foundation for e-Learning usage among all lecturers and students within the FEB. The SOPs, authorized by the Faculty Dean in August 2022, officially promoted the comprehensive implementation of e-Learning in the faculty's educational practices, thereby strengthening information-related aspects of e-Learning at UPR's FEB.

E. Evaluation Results after the Service

According to Alqahtani & Rajkhan (2020), technology literacy among teachers and students is a critical factor for successful e-learning during the pandemic. Mahyob's (2021) study demonstrated the effectiveness and positive student response to online learning. To assess the impact of the service activities, an online questionnaire was distributed to adopt e-Learning in the upcoming semester, and 20% stated they had not yet used e-Learning.

The questionnaire also included inquiries about the perceived difficulty level of e-Learning
usage after attending the Coaching Clinic. The results indicated that 41.7% of respondents found it easy, 55% found it moderately challenging, and 8.3% found it difficult. These findings suggest that the issue of user-friendliness highlighted in the research background regarding UPR’s e-Learning has been addressed. However, it is recognized that regular socialization regarding e-Learning usage should be conducted, and the implementation of e-Learning coaching should be periodic.

Discussion

The community service project presented several unique implications that emerged from its implementation. Firstly, the project aimed to enhance faculty engagement by providing coaching clinics and workshops on e-Learning. This initiative fostered a sense of inclusivity and collaboration among faculty members, creating a more supportive and adaptive educational environment. Additionally, the project addressed the issue of accessibility and equity by offering guidance, simplified modules, and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). By bridging the gap in e-Learning proficiency, the research team ensured that all lecturers and students had equal opportunities to benefit from online learning resources.

Furthermore, the project demonstrated the institution’s resilience in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. By swiftly adapting to the circumstances and implementing e-Learning, UPR showcased its ability to navigate challenging situations while maintaining the delivery of quality education. The comprehensive support provided, including coaching clinics, workshops, and the development of guide modules, strengthened the institutional capacity to withstand disruptions and continue effective teaching and learning practices.

An important aspect of the project was the empowerment of student leadership. By involving students in the training process and encouraging them to assist their peers, the project fostered a sense of ownership and responsibility among the student community. This approach not only enhanced students’ understanding of e-Learning but also created a sustainable ecosystem where students became advocates for its adoption, contributing to the long-term success and integration of e-Learning within the faculty.

Additionally, the project emphasized the importance of continuous improvement and evaluation. The post-service evaluation, conducted through an online questionnaire, provided valuable insights into the progress and challenges faced by lecturers and students in adopting e-Learning. This feedback-driven approach allowed the research team and the institution to refine their strategies and address any remaining difficulties, ensuring ongoing enhancements in e-Learning practices.

Overall, the community service project yielded unique implications by fostering faculty engagement, promoting accessibility and equity, showcasing institutional resilience, empowering student leadership, and emphasizing continuous improvement. These implications underscore the significance of collaborative efforts and proactive measures in leveraging educational technology to overcome challenges and provide effective learning experiences in an ever-evolving educational landscape.

CONCLUSIONS

This study reveals that the absence of guidelines and the lack of user-friendly technology are the root causes of the suboptimal e-Learning utilization at UPR. To address these challenges, the authors propose community service activities, including an e-Learning Coaching Clinic for lecturers, e-Learning workshops for students, the development of e-Learning Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), and the creation of e-Learning usage guidelines for lecturers and students at the Faculty of Economics and Business.

These interventions aim to enhance the knowledge and skills of participants in utilizing e-Learning effectively and establish a structured framework to ensure consistency and improve the overall e-Learning experience. By proposing specific recommendations tailored to the UPR context, the research offers practical solutions to enhance the utilization of e-Learning at the university.

This study contributes to the field by providing updated insights into the utilization of e-Learning in the specific context of UPR and by employing the RCA method to analyze and address the challenges associated with e-Learning implementation. It emphasizes the need for the development of SOPs and guidelines for lecturers and students, offering practical guidance to effectively navigate the e-Learning environment.

The community service activities conducted based on the research findings included the e-Learning Coaching Clinic for lecturers and the e-Learning workshops for students. These activities aimed to provide technical assistance, educate participants on e-Learning usage, distribute guidelines and SOPs, and establish a call center for consultation regarding e-Learning challenges. The activities were well-received by both lecturers and students, with positive outcomes observed in terms of increased familiarity and utilization of e-Learning.
The study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. Firstly, the data collection method relied on self-report measures, which are subject to response biases and inaccuracies. Incorporating objective measures or alternative data collection methods in future studies would strengthen the validity of the findings. Additionally, the study was conducted within a limited time frame, which may have hindered the depth of analysis and exploration of certain variables. Allowing for an extended timeline in future research could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the topic. Moreover, the study focused on a specific context or setting, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other contexts. Future research should aim to investigate the phenomenon in various settings to ensure the applicability of the results across different environments.

Moving forward, there are several important areas for future research. Longitudinal studies would be valuable in examining changes and trends over time, providing a deeper understanding of the variables under investigation and shedding light on the long-term effects and implications. Conducting comparative research across different populations, cultures, or regions would facilitate a more nuanced understanding of the subject matter, highlighting similarities, differences, and contextual factors that influence the variables of interest. Intervention studies should be conducted to investigate the effectiveness of strategies aimed at addressing identified issues, guiding the implementation of evidence-based interventions. Lastly, exploring the impact of technological advancements on the research area, such as artificial intelligence or virtual reality, would be crucial to staying up-to-date with the evolving landscape and uncovering new opportunities and challenges.

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