

Evaluating English Study Program from Fresh Alumni's Perspectives

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Abstract

This research is conducted to assess the effectiveness of the English Education program in preparing the students to become teachers and professional workers, to point out its benefits and drawbacks, and to offer recommendation for improvement based on the alumni's perspectives. The data were gathered through questionnaire survey to determine the extent to which the program has provided students with teaching and professional skills. The results revealed that more than 73 percents of the alumni have worked prior to their graduation mostly in education field. A significant number of participants express satisfaction towards the programs for equipping them with necessary skills and knowledge to thrive in both teaching and professional domains. However, entrepreneur skills should be improved to enable the graduates creating employment opportunities. The findings suggest that combining practical entrepreneur skills with internship programs could better prepare students with learning experience to build their future enterprise. It is highly advised that the regular evaluation of academic programs should be conducted to align with the current professional needs and to promote modifications and innovations. Alumni networking should also be strengthened to connect the fresh graduates with new educational and career prospects. Having programs that are relevant with the market needs and strong alumni networking will ultimately boost professional integration in the labor market.

Keywords: alumni's perspectives, english study, professional integration, program evaluation.

1 INTRODUCTION

According to Bahnasse et al. (2023), a reliable source of market research and economic data, English is the most widely spoken language in the world. As of 2021, more than 1.35 billion people speak English as their native or second language. Research shows that knowledge of English can facilitate participation in the global economy and industrial revolution (Tulung, 2020). English as communication skills has a critical role in the process of workforce employment (see Roshid & Chowdhury, 2013). This condition gives a strong consequence in the world of business and workplace, especially in the global market. As one of the official languages of the United Nations, English has become the lingua-franca of the business world regardless off geographical, social, political or religious differences. As a result, English communication skills become a required ticket for people who want to work in prominent positions, besides their specific expertise. Therefore, the emphasis of building English communication skills in education is of utmost importance in the current era to prepare the students entering the global job market. In this case, having qualified English teachers in the classroom is one of the key elements to create students with proficient English communication skills. Following this, the courses in English study program should prepare the future teachers with the professional skills that enable them to anticipate global job market as well.

Program evaluation has been a popular area of study in educational settings, with Language Program Evaluation playing an essential role (Hidayat, 2018; Muhaji & Muzammil, 2020; Uzun, 2016). Currently, program evaluation has become a critical field

of study in educational research. Part of the essential elements which establish the endless process of curriculum evaluation is ongoing program evaluation (Brown, 1995). It has important role from formative internal improvements to broad summative judgement (Harris, 2009) to improve the quality of the program, ensure educational effectiveness, and the survival of the language teaching profession (Norris, 2009). Further, evaluations creates decision that relate to the factual situation (Fournier, 2005). As a result, conducting regular program evaluation is crucial in providing quality education. Due to its significance, a program evaluation is absolutely required to be made in every educational institution.

Though program evaluation has a crucial role in education field, still there has been limited research on the evaluation of English programs in Indonesia (Hidayat, 2018). In order to gain the potential benefits of the research studies of English program evaluation, rigorous studies are strongly encouraged to conduct, some of which are reviewed in this study. The first one is the study conducted by Wati (2011) who investigated the effectiveness of an English teacher training program and the future needs of the same program. Using a single data source, she invited 55 elementary school English teachers to respond to her questionnaire. The results show that the program was considered effective to improve the motivation and confidence of the participants. However, the participants emphasize the needs of supplying the materials upgrading their language skills. It is because they admit their needs of improving their English skills along with their teaching skills. The second research on program evaluation was conducted by Rohmah (2010) that used multiple data source through questionnaire, document reviews, and focus group discussions. In her study, she examined an in- service English teacher training program conducted under a program of Learning Assistance Programs for Islamic Schools. The study shows that the teachers' competence in English teaching skills, general teaching skills, language proficiency, motivation and confidence improved. The most interesting findings reveals that although the material taught at the program were not mostly compatible with the Islamic school context, the participants felt that they are matched with the Islamic schools' needs and can be used in the teaching practice. The third study related to program evaluation in Indonesia is the one conducted by Muhaji and Muzammil (2020). The study conducted an evaluation program of an English education program in a private university in Malang, East Java, Indonesia. The result show positive impressions of the alumni about their education experience in general which led into strengthening their strive to reach their goal in education field.

Finally, the purpose of this research is to address the research topic of evaluating the effectiveness of the English study programs. The goal of this article is to evaluate how well the curriculum prepares students for the workforce, to highlight its advantages and disadvantages, and to make ideas for improvement. The need of connecting academic programs to market demands underpins the significance of this study, and its findings may have implications for curriculum development, public policy formulation, and scholarly research in related fields.

2 RESEARCH METHODS

The purpose of this study is to examine the effectiveness of English degree programs offered by Indonesian Private College in preparing graduates for the teaching professions and labor market and how it develops specific skills and attributes valued by employers. To achieve this objective, the research design of this study included the use of a survey with a non-probability sample of English study fresh alumni. This strategy yielded extensive data on graduates' perceptions of the effectiveness of their English courses in a variety of disciplines, despite some degree of generalizability and potential limitations of response bias. Other research methods such as focus groups and interviews may be used in subsequent studies to further explore the topic and complement the current findings.

2.1 Research Instrument and Data Analysis Procedure

To gain the data, this study applied the questionnaire survey that consisted of a series of specifically constructed questions to select a particular example, issue, or request from different alternative (Sugiono, 2017). The four primary steps in conducting a questionnaire survey are creating the survey questionnaire, choosing a sample for interviews, carrying out the survey, and gathering and interpreting the results

This study employed the Google Forms tool to conduct the survey because it allows for the design of complex questionnaires and distribution. This web-based application additionally offers the ease of assessing the collected data via lucid charts and automatically stores filled-out forms on Google Drive. Furthermore, it is simple to compile replies from Google Forms into a table or export them to spreadsheet for further examination. The survey consisted of 10 questions focusing on demographic information, the current circumstances of professions, their future plan and the value of the academic program offered by the English Study program.

2.2 Participants

Once the survey's questions have been designed, the sample of survey respondents needs to be selected. Depending on the goals of the survey and the nature of the project, the sample size may be very large or very narrow. Figure 1 displays the total number of survey respondents. Out of the 48 replies the researchers received, 77 % were from females and 23% from males. We can also conclude from this evidence that women make a substantial contribution to higher education, especially in English studies programs.

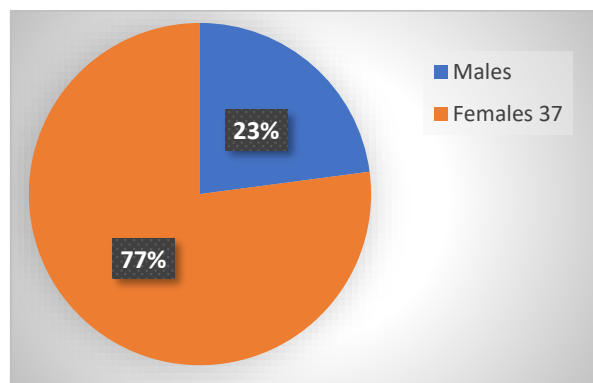


Figure 1. Survey Participants

3 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Result

The survey was filled by 48 participants, as was already mentioned before. 77 percent of respondents identified as female and less than 50 percents identified as males. This fact shows that in modern era, females are now significantly represented in higher education (Bahasse et al., 2023).

The age Three age groups—those under 30, those in their 30s and 40s, and those beyond 40—make up the age distribution of survey participants, as seen in Figure 2. Preliminary evaluations show that the majority of respondents—more than 50 percent—are in the 20–30 age range. Of the respondents, 13% are between the ages of 30 and 40, with only three respondents over the age of 40. This numbers reveal that most of the fresh alumni are in their productive age and normally starting their first job after their graduation.

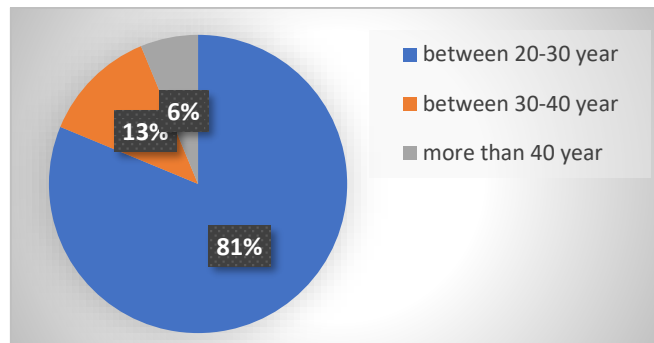


Figure 2. Age Distribution

Figure 3 depicts the respondents' current circumstances regarding their job position. The surprising data shows that 73 percents of the fresh alumni have already worked even before their graduation. Only 27 percent respondents admitted that have not worked yet. The fact that over 50 percents of students are working already while studying may be a reflection that the program quality has prepared the students to be qualified in a competitive labor market.

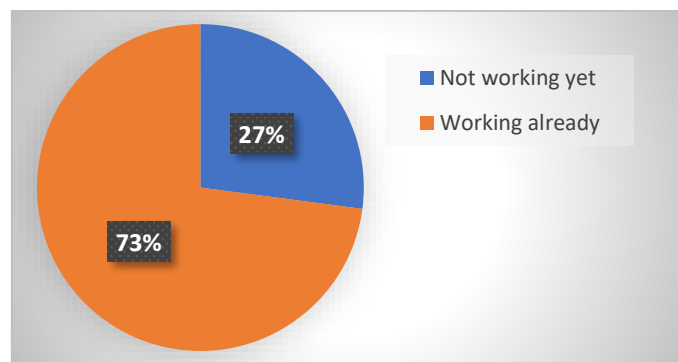


Figure 3. Current Situation of Alumni Regarding their Job

Figure 4(a) shows types jobs of the alumni who have already worked before they graduate. 57 percents of alumni have already worked in educational field (see Figure 4(b)), which show that English study program has successfully reach its main target, that is preparing English teachers and educators. The fact that more than 50 percents of alumni are working in education field prior to their graduation indicates that the program is relevant to the demand of the market and it gives students the qualification to enter the education field.

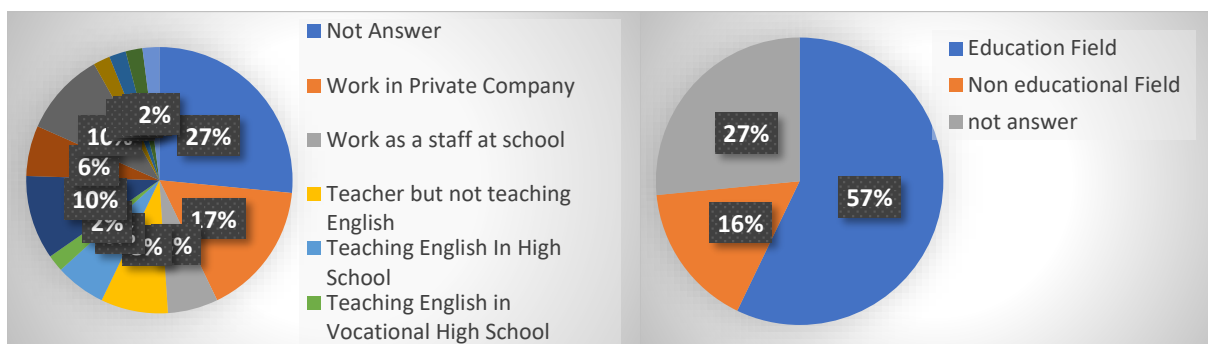


Figure 4. Summary of Current Situation of Alumni Regarding their Job

Figure 5 reveals the respondents' future plan. Though the major objective of the English studies program is to prepare future teachers and educators, only 35 percent respondents prefer education and teaching field as their future professions. 20 percents are not interested in that particular field. The facts should be an alarm for the management and stake holder of English study program to become more concern about the content of the programs especially on their relevancy with the teaching profession, as it is the main goal of the department. The 22 percents of respondents prefer not answering also show that significant numbers of alumni have not found the clear plan for their future that might be caused by the unclear program they received. Finally, only 23 percents show their interest in taking Master degree. This condition reveals only small numbers of alumni were inspired to continue their study. Undoubtedly, the effect of Covid 19 pandemic to current economic condition has made it challenging to get additional income to support studying in higher degree. Thus, informing students about the different types of both national and international scholarships and the benefits of continuing their studies are essential to be given by English study programs.

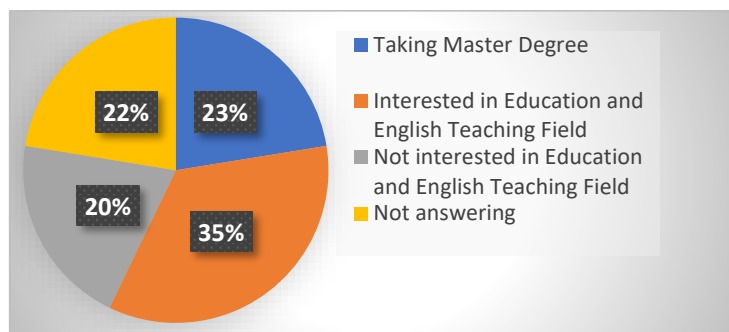


Figure 5. Fresh Alumni Future Plan

As seen in Figures 6-12 the following question is answered: "Are you in agreement or disagreement that the courses offered by the English Studies program have benefited you?" Alumni were polled on their levels of satisfaction in a variety of areas, including finding work, digital skills, classroom management, selecting teaching media, speaking skills, public speaking skills and entrepreneur skills.

These data indicate that the English Studies programs were successful in creating graduates with the best job market profiles and with entrepreneur skills. Graduates who have attended the programs have improved and developed specific traits, as well as learned a number of unique abilities that allow them to successfully gain their dream job or create their business. Furthermore, graduates of English Studies degrees are now more likely to find work and pursue careers in a variety of fields, including teaching. According to the Alumni Association, these courses were valuable to those who completed their studies. As a result of the courses they have studied, the students have acquired the knowledge and skills required for master's and/or doctoral study.

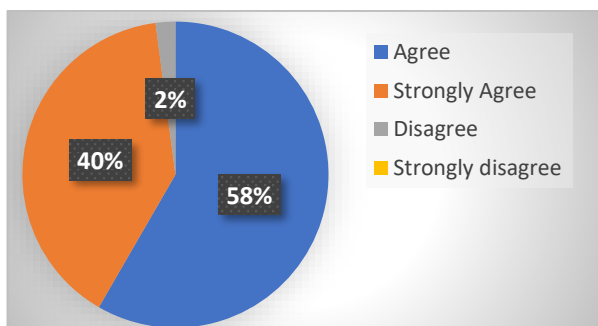


Figure 6. Helping in Finding Work

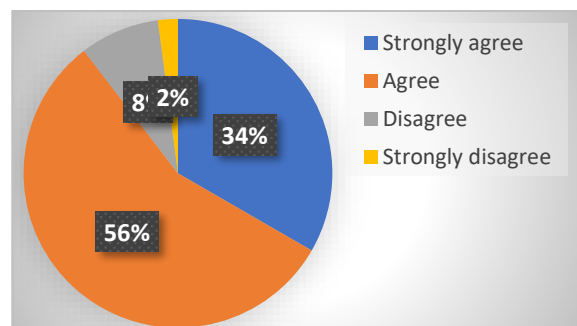


Figure 7. Digital Skills

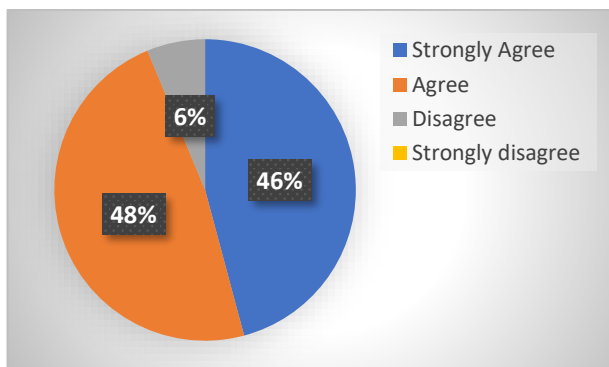


Figure 8. Classroom Management Skills

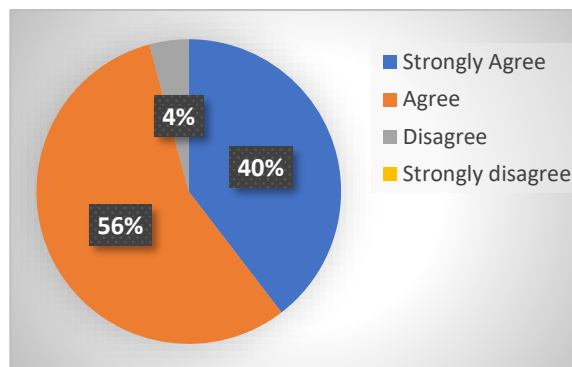


Figure 9. Selecting Teaching Media Skill

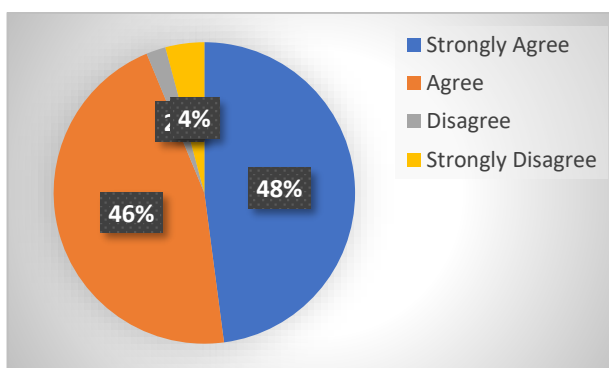


Figure 10. Speaking Skills

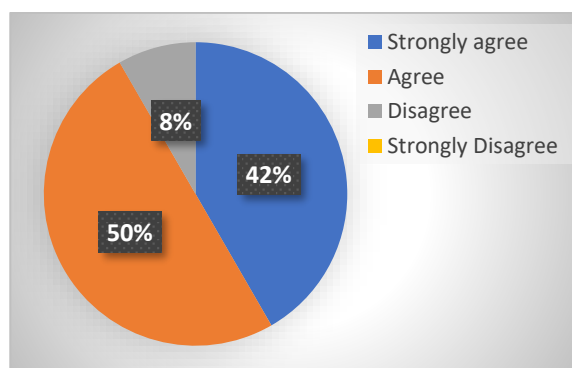


Figure 11. Public Speaking Skill

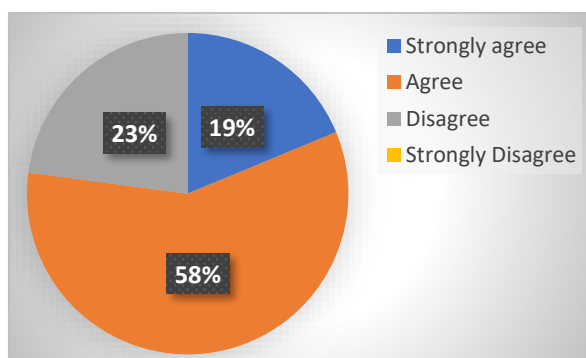


Figure 12. Entrepreneur Skills

Figure 6 to Figure 12 depict alumni agreement or disagreement with several statements made about the English Studies program's courses. The results of the English department graduates shed light on a number of difficulties, making this test worthwhile and beneficial. Graduate attitudes toward the effectiveness of English Studies courses are critical because they will have a substantial impact on the progression of the programs. This discussion can be used to support a variety of initiatives and innovation to make better improvement forwardersamaan yang Anda libatkan dalam tulisan harus dikutip supaya pembaca mengetahui fungsinya.

3.2 Discussion

So far, the study has focused on alumni satisfaction with finding work, digital skills, classroom management, selecting teaching media, speaking skills, public speaking skills and entrepreneur skills offered by English Study Program. Based on the findings, it is clear that the courses are successful in preparing graduates for the job market, particularly in teaching. This finding appears to be consistent with earlier research highlighting the

relevance of English language fluency in employability and career progression, particularly in high-value service areas like education and business. Roshid and Chowdhury (2013) discovered, for example, that English language proficiency was crucial in securing career possibilities for Bangladeshi graduates in the Australian job market.

Another significant conclusion is that the courses are beneficial in assisting graduates in developing communication skills and performing well in job interviews. Previous study backs up this claim. Soft skills, such as communication, teamwork, and problem-solving, have been shown to improve employability and professional success in studies by Pandey and Pandey (2014). The data, however, appear to show that the courses are ineffective in terms of finding internships and passing writing examinations, which is consistent with past research that has identified writing as a major issue for English language learners, particularly in academic environments. Ma (2020) discovered that postgraduate students had substantial difficulties writing in English.

Overall, the findings provide significant insights into the strengths and shortcomings of language education programs, as well as areas that need to be improved in order to increase graduates' employability and job success. By taking into account alumni perceptions and job outcomes, our study adds to past research and contributes to the continuing discussion about language education and its role in defining professional choices.

Furthermore, this study proposes The ADDIE technique to aid in the construction of successful and effective English educational programs (Bahnasse et al., 2023). This methodology is the most popular and widely used for the design of educational projects. The procedure consists of five steps.

The first step is analysis, the purpose is to collect and inspect all of the components needed to construct a track. The second step is design, academics can construct a full-track architecture, including the details of each module's content, at this level. The third step is development, during this stage that the stakeholders for the track will create all of the teaching aids and instructional materials. The fourth step is implementation, at this point that courses can be uploaded to an LMS (Learning Management System) like Moodle, teachers can share them with students, and distribution options for enrolled students or the general public can be specified. The fifth step is evaluation, during this period that it can be evaluated the effectiveness of the track, such as its return on investment (ROI) or students' satisfaction. The survey was filled by 48 participants, as was already mentioned before. 77 percent of respondents identified as female and less than 50 percents identified as males. This fact shows that in modern era, females are now significantly represented in higher education (Bahnasse et al., 2023).

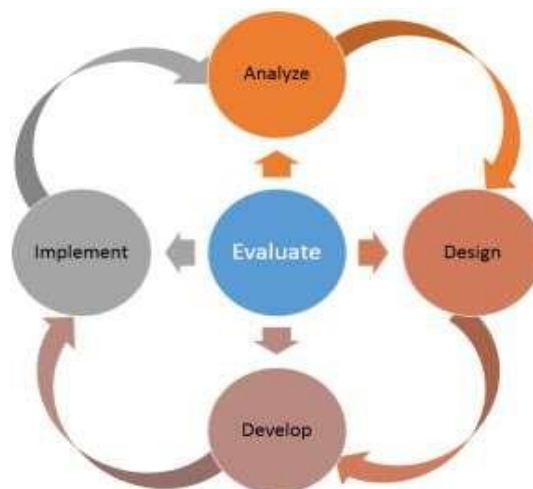


Figure 15. The ADDIE method summary (Bahnasse et al., 2023)

Similarly, it is proposed that the department use this technique to improve the content and instruction of its courses, which may lead to improved student outcomes and employability. To improve course delivery and accessibility, the department should increase the frequency of combining digital technologies and online learning platforms such as Learning Management Systems (LMS), specifically in this college namely EdLink. This can help with the digital transformation of education as the direct impact of COVID-19 pandemic. It is recommended that the department conduct regular reviews to determine the performance of its courses, including the use of online platforms and digital technologies, in order to maintain the high grade of its program.

In general, this study emphasizes the significance of regularly evaluating and enhancing academic programs' performance in addressing labor market demands and preparing graduates for successful professions. Therefore, it is the aim of the study that the research will help to advance future reforms generally and the English Study Program specifically

4 CONCLUSION

This study examined the effectiveness of the English Study Program in terms of its impact on graduates' employability and career progression. According to the research findings, the English Studies department's courses were incredibly crucial in preparing graduates for the labor market, particularly in the teaching sector. However, there is always room for improvement, particularly in terms of improving students' entrepreneur' skills. To address these areas for improvement, pedagogical proposals have been offered. This includes providing mentoring programs for students with entrepreneur courses. It is also critical to consider improving the incorporation of digital technology in teaching. The ADDIE approach is one such method proposed in this study.

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