

THE TRACER STUDY: AN IN-DEPTH SEARCH OF THE ENGLISH EDUCATION PROGRAM GRADUATES

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Abstract: Universities have an important role in generating amazing alums who can compete with others. This role makes universities try to find a way to increase the alums' quality. One of them is the tracer study. Tracer study is a technique to track the alums' quality. Therefore, the research objective was to investigate the status, quality, and accomplishment of the graduates/alums of the English Education Program of FKIP UHAMKA. This research employed a mixed-method sequential explanatory research design which combined quantitative and qualitative research design. As many as 98 graduates from the English Education Program participated in the study. A questionnaire that was validated using a validity test before it was distributed through several social media was used as the instrument of this study. Findings have discovered that most of the graduates of the English Education Program who graduated in 2021 can implement their knowledge and abilities per the field of education they had on campus. Unfortunately, graduates whose jobs were in line with their field of study still got low payment. Further research is needed to evaluate the competencies and training that need to be accommodated by the campus to prepare upcoming alums before entering the workspace.

Keywords: Tracer Study, University, Alumni

INTRODUCTION

Universities are essential in producing a new generation of excellent quality. They are also responsible for providing their alums with sufficient knowledge in harmony with the job's requirements. However, they tend to be rated and criticized by society based on their alums' performances in work. As an educational institution's final result, alums need decent quality and quantity. The quality and quantity of the alums can be revealed using a tracking technique named tracer study. In Indonesia, a tracer study is implemented to measure an educational institution's quality, which may affect its accreditation. In addition, tracer study is a method or a technique implemented to discover the alums' current process and status in their work; therefore, all educational institutions can improve the knowledge and competencies of their upcoming alums. The theory is matched with Albina and Sumagaysay (2020); Sriyono (2009), who state that tracer study in a university can observe its curriculum periodically to validate whether or not the alums have adequate knowledge, competencies and also abilities required in their careers.

It is also possible for tracer study to discover the alums' way of implementing the knowledge and abilities they acquire in work. In its implementation, tracer study ideally takes about 1-3 years after graduating. Moreover, the university or any other educational institution can increase its quality by utilizing the result of the tracer study. Several experts also reinforce these necessities of tracer study. Several experts describe the need and importance of tracer study in a university context. One of them is Schomburg (2011), who explains tracer study as an activity to gain valuable information to develop the university. Soemantri, cited in Fajaryati et al.

(2015), also mentions that a tracer study can: 1) show the stakeholder's satisfaction with the alums' performance; 2) get some feedback to develop the institution, working experience, and quality; 3) increase the relationship between the alums and the alma mater. Other than that, it can be utilized to evaluate the relevance of the university and become core information for students, parents, and lecturers.

Currently, many universities utilize tracer study periodically. This condition happens because the universities need the alums' feedback to improve the education system, plan the program, and prepare to in giving a purposeful experience through learning in the universities. Due to its importance and implementation in universities, previous research has been conducted to serve as material for analyzing and enhancing the topic. Safi'i and Priyantoro (2019); Zulhingga (2015); Evi Roviati et al. (2015); Muhammad Ilham Bakhtiar and Suciani Latif (2017); Maryam Rahim and Meiske Puluhulawa (2017); Ramadiani et al., (2016) utilize descriptive percentage to analyze tracer study and gain some benefits which are: 1) to fulfill the needs of data and information about the alums; 2) to fulfill the needs of data for accreditation; 3) to ease university in organizing the data; 4) to ease the university in improving alums' quality.

University of Muhammadiyah Prof. Dr. HAMKA also uses tracer study. In the past few years, UHAMKA used tracer study 4 (four) times, and this is its fifth attempt. In those years, the requirement of certain numbers of participants was indeed achieved; however, the number was just slightly above the requirement, and it needed to be higher. In its fifth attempt, UHAMKA tries something different to overcome this matter. UHAMKA uses social media and websites to gain more people to be participants in the current tracer study. Some previous research also supports this theory. Thomas & Wagi (2019); Miftahul Khair et al. (2016) do research by utilizing a web system to track and get some data from the alums. This research shows that the website system can record and save the alums' data and be used to conduct a form of survey efficiently. In line with these results, Renny et al. (2013) claim that university requires technology to advance tracer study as one of the technology, a website or social media can be operated to simplify the process of the tracer study, which may increase the respondents' participation. Furthermore, Marisa et al. (2016) emphasize that using a website or social media needs to attract more respondents to the tracer study.

Based on various explanations and claims above, tracer studies can coordinate university services with society's needs. The tracer study results can be applied to evaluate the university's programs, services, systems, and decisions. In other words, tracer study is important in achieving the university's objective. Moreover, the rate of participation in tracer study can be boosted drastically using a website or social media. Therefore, this research is conducted to investigate the quality of the alums of Universitas Muhammadiyah Prof. Dr. HAMKA in work by utilizing the tracer study technique. In addition, the research findings are intended to increase the system's quality, decisions, and upcoming alums.

METHOD

Creswell (2015) explains that mixed methods are a research design that combines both quantitative and qualitative. This research employed a mixed-methods sequential explanatory research design. Furthermore, sequential explanatory means that the first data collecting and analysis are done using a quantitative method, followed by the second data collecting and analysis using a quantitative design in consecutive phases. This research process is divided into 4

stages: 1) concept and instrument development; 2) data collecting; 3) data analysis; 4) completing the result of the tracer study.

As many as 98 students in the English Department of Universitas Muhammadiyah Prof. Dr. HAMKA became the research participants. At least 30% of the participants were enlisted as the research sample. As for the research instrument, this research applied a questionnaire to gain the required data, and the questionnaire was distributed through several social media to ease the data collection. Following that, the questionnaire being used was divided into two kinds. The first questionnaire, consisting of 4 (four) parts, was for the alums of UHAMKA, and the second questionnaire, consisting of 7 (seven) indicators, was for the alum’s stakeholders. It was also created by some standardized items and validated using a validity test before it was distributed to the research participants. In addition, the data was collected using a survey and analyzed using a qualitative descriptive design.

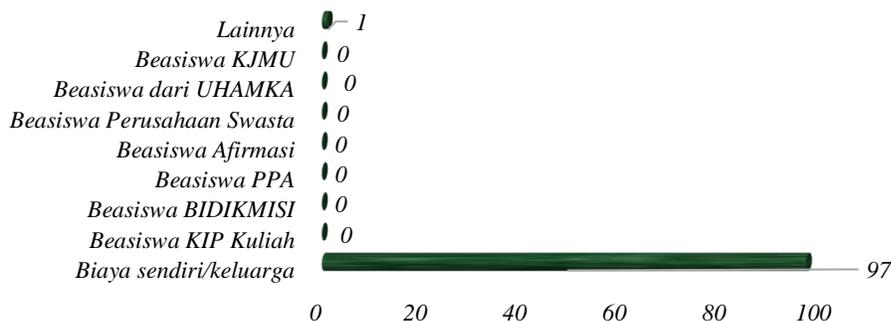
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the research are presented in the description and the figures below.

Source of Tuition Fees

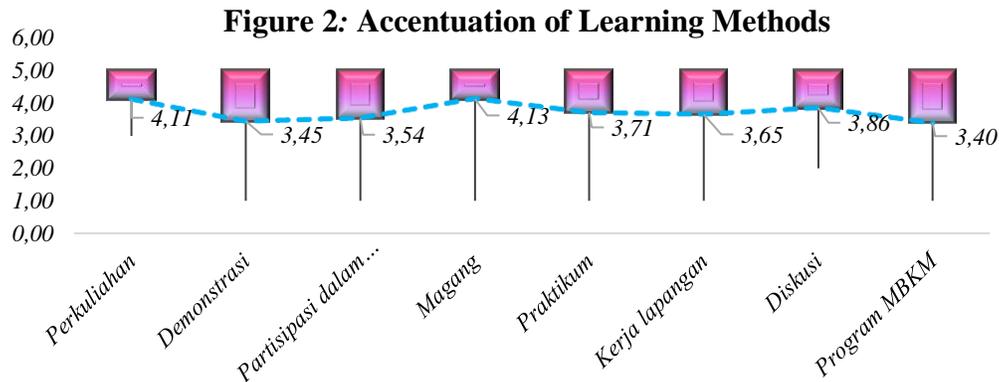
There are various tuition fees for students of English Education Department graduates of 2021, namely KIP Lecture scholarship, BIDIKMISI Scholarships, PPA Scholarships, Affirmation Scholarships, Corporate/Private Scholarships, UHAMKA Scholarships, KJMU Scholarships, and their expenses. In general, tuition fees for English Education Department graduates of 2021 come from their costs. Based on the result, it was reported that almost all of the respondents (97 respondents) had sources of tuition fees from their expenses.

Figure 1: Source of Tuition Fee



Accentuation of Learning Methods

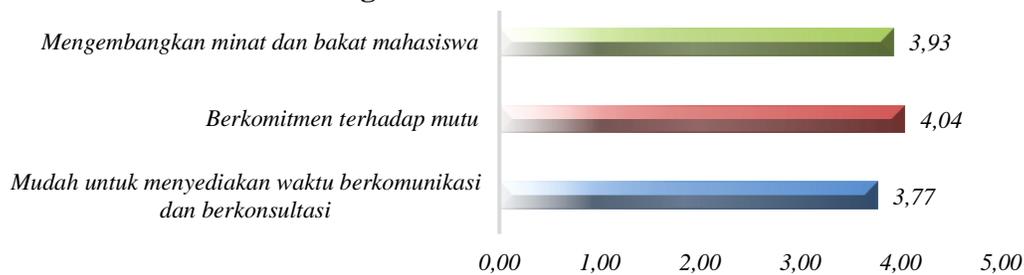
One of the main objectives of the UHAMKA 2022 Tracer Study research is to achieve feedback from alums of the English Education Department, FKIP UHAMKA. One of the input points that became important input was regarding aspects of learning at UHAMKA. The Tracer Study Research 2022 has divided the research points into 7, namely lectures, demonstrations, participation in research projects, internships, practicum, fieldwork, discussions, and MBKM programs. The issues of assessment in the learning aspect can vary. In general, the assessment given by alums on emphasizing learning methods is quite good. The points that get more than adequate ratings are internships. Alumni graduates of 2021 consider that their learning method highly emphasized the internship aspect.



**Satisfaction with UHAMKA Services
Assessment to Heads**

The greatest service that alums felt towards their heads is about being committed to quality. The 2022 Tracer Study research has grouped 3 types of services that are felt by graduates of 2021 for their leaders, namely communication and consulting services, commitment to quality, and the development of student interests and talents. The result reported that most of the alums of 2021 felt the best service they got from the heads was the commitment to the quality of learning. However, other services the leadership provides still need to be improved for students, such as services to develop interests and talents and giving time to communicate and consult.

Figure 3: Assessment to Heads

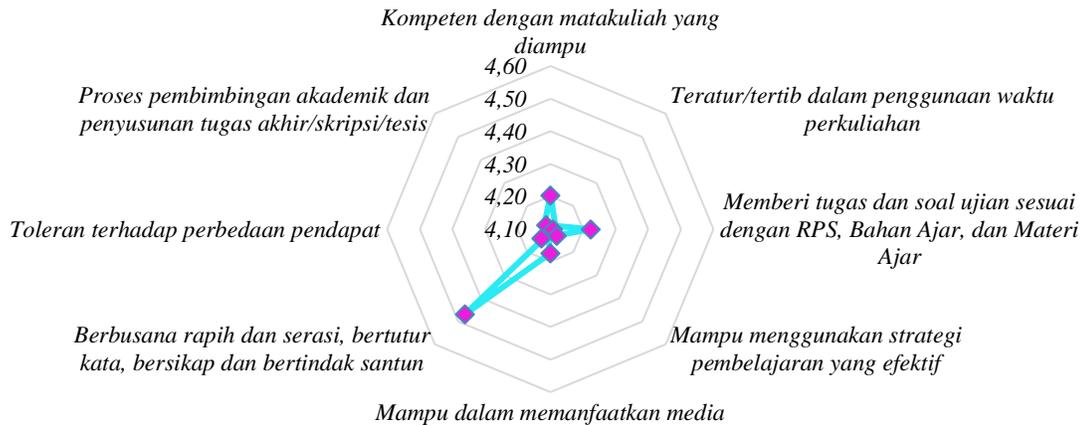


Assessment to Lecturer

The 2022 Tracer Study research has grouped several assessments to alums of 2021 on UHAMKA’s lecturers. There were various kinds of instruments involved in assessing the lecturers. The instruments are the lecturers' skill in teaching certain subjects, the lecturers' punctuality, the lecturers' ability to give assignments and exams following the lesson plan (RPS), the teaching materials, the lecturers' ability to use effective learning strategies, the ability to use learning media, to dress neatly and harmoniously, to behave and act politely, to be tolerant of differences in opinion, and the ability to give academic guidance and to prepare the final project/thesis/thesis. It was revealed that the highest satisfaction of alums to lecturers was in the ability of lecturers to dress neatly and harmoniously, speak words, behave, and act politely to their students. Meanwhile, the other highest satisfaction felt by alums of the English Education Department graduates in 2021 towards lecturers was the ability of lecturers to provide

assignments and exam questions following teaching materials or teaching materials and the competence of lecturers with the subjects being taught. Then, the lowest service felt by alums to lecturers is related to the process of academic guidance and preparation of final assignments, as well as the regularity/order of lecturers using lecture time.

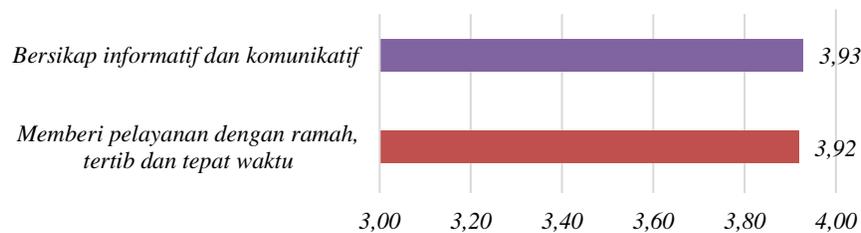
Figure 4: Assessment to Lecturers



Assessment of UHAMKA Employees

Based on the data, two types of services are provided by educational employees to the graduates of 2021. It is reported that the education staff/employees are friendly, orderly, organized, informative, and communicative with students. The two types of services we are providing friendly, orderly, and timely services, as well as being informative and communicative.

Figure 5: Assessment of UHAMKA Employees

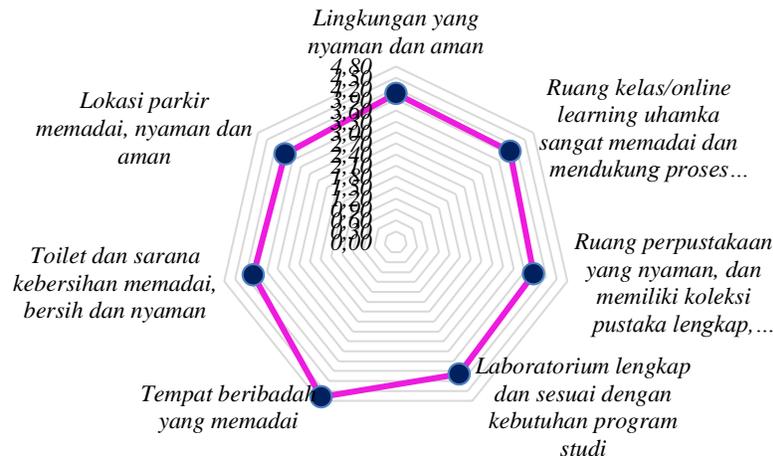


Assessment of UHAMKA Infrastructure Service

The 2022 Tracer Study research also examined the size and extent of campus facilities and infrastructure in serving the graduates of English Education 2021. Various assessments of facilities and infrastructure services that are evaluated include a comfortable and safe environment and classrooms/online learning. UHAMKA is adequate and supports the learning process. A cozy library room and a complete library collection, as well as easy access to information, full laboratories according to study program needs, adequate places of worship, adequate, clean, and comfortable toilets and hygiene facilities, adequate, comfortable, and safe parking locations, as well as easy access to go and back to campus. In general, the assessment given by alums to the aspects of the assessment of campus facilities and infrastructure is quite

good. The points that get more than adequate are the services for sufficient places of worship. Alumni graduates of 2021 considered that the most satisfactory service for infrastructure is the service for sufficient places of worship.

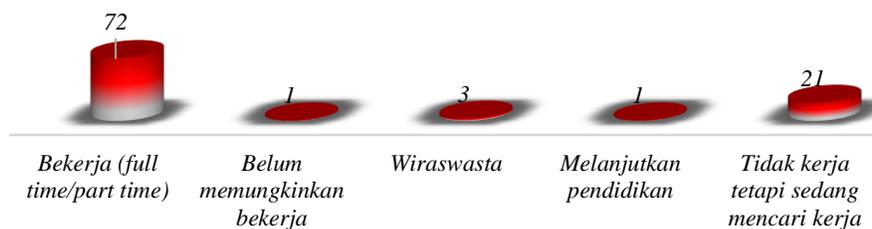
Figure 6: Assessment of UHAMKA Infrastructure Service



Description of the Current Alumni Activities

There are many activities that graduates of 2021 are currently doing. Some work full-time and part-time, some still need to be able to work, some choose to open their own business or become entrepreneurs, some decide to continue their education, and some are still looking for work. Based on the 2022 Tracer Study questionnaire results, out of 98 respondents, 72 are working, 1 alumnus is not able to work yet, 3 alumni have become entrepreneurs, 1 alumnus chose to continue their education, and 21 alumni are looking for a job.

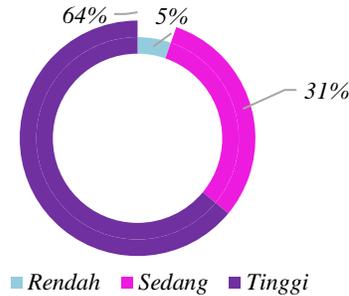
Figure 7: Current Alumni Activities



Compatibility of Field of Study with Work

A total of 48 (64%) respondents stated that the field of work currently being carried out had a high level of conformity with the expected graduate profile. A total of 23 (31%) respondents stated that their current field of work has a moderate level of conformity with the profile of graduates to be achieved during the lecture process. Furthermore, as many as 4 (5%) respondents stated that the current work field has a low level of conformity with the graduates' profile to be achieved during the lecture process. This data is based on the results of 86 respondents who filled out the 2022 Tracer Study questionnaire instrument.

Figure 8: Compatibility of Field of Study with Work



Waiting Period to Get a Job

Based on the data, most of the alums of English Education Department graduates of 2021 do not have a long waiting period to work. Out of 98 respondents, none of the alums got a job for less than 3 months either before or after graduating. Furthermore, 8 alumni got a job within 3 months to less than 6 months after graduating, 16 alumni got a position between 6 months to 12 months after graduating, 28 alumni got jobs between 12 months to less than 18 months, and a total of 46 alum others got jobs for more than 18 months after graduating from college.

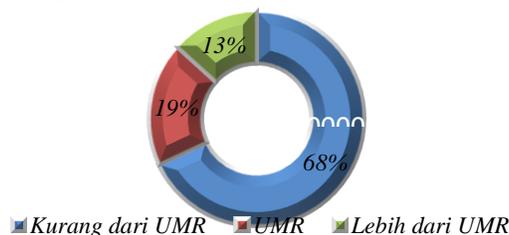
Figure 9: Waiting Period to Get a Job



Alumni Salary Amount

Income and bonuses, both from main work or other (side) jobs, are important points that need to be known from alums of the English Education Department graduates in 2021. Knowing their salary amount can be a standard measure of the income and bonuses from fresh graduates of UHAMKA. This fact can also measure that UHAMKA graduates get income or bonuses that follow their abilities and what they do. As many as 10 out of 98 respondents have an income more than the average minimum salary. As many as 14 respondents have an income that fits the minimum average wage, 51 respondents have an income less than the average minimum salary, and 25 respondents did not answer the options.

Figure 10: Alumni Salary Amount



Type of Company/Agency/Institution Workplace

Figure 11 below shows that 11 respondents work in government agencies, 2 respondents work in non-profit organizations/non-governmental organizations, 26 respondents work in private companies, 7 respondents manage their own company, 4 respondents work in multilateral institutions or organizations, and 16 other respondents work beyond the points mentioned.

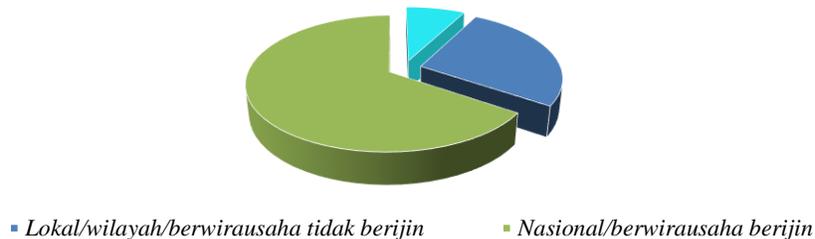
Figure 11: Type of Company/Agency/Institution Workplace



Level of Workplace / Entrepreneurship

The data revealed that 49 respondents had national workplace/licensed entrepreneurship (the highest frequency). Meanwhile, 20 respondents had local/regional/unlicensed entrepreneurship levels, and 6 had international/multinational workplace levels.

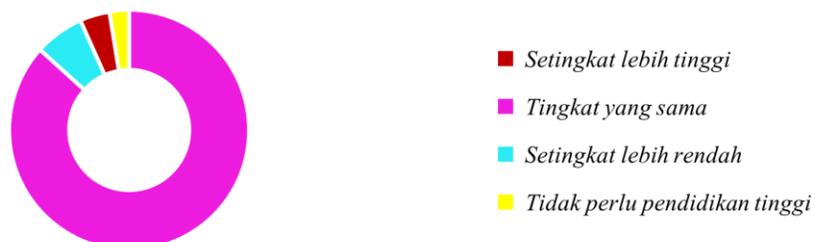
Figure 12: Level of Workplace/Entrepreneur



Level of Job Education

Figure 13 shows the level of education in the current 2021 alum job. A total of 65 respondents had the same level of education, 3 respondents chose one level higher than the knowledge they learned during college, 5 respondents chose a lower level than the knowledge they learned during college, and 2 respondents chose not to require higher education to work in the place where they work.

Figure 13: Level of Job Education



Level of Competencies Mastered When Studying in College and Employment

The competence/ability of the alums of the English Education Department FKIP UHAMKA can be formed by several things, including individual basic competencies and/or competencies obtained from the field of science. Competence in the field of science is obtained by alumni mainly when they are studying at UHAMKA. The competence of UHAMKA alums obtained from lectures is general knowledge related to the field of science from the study program where the alums study. While studying at UHAMKA, UHAMKA alums are also very likely to acquire abilities that are more towards soft skills. Soft skills are generally formed from activities undertaken by UHAMKA alums inside and outside UHAMKA. From the results of the questionnaire, it was found that most of the competencies needed in the work of 2021 graduates are the ability in ethics, teamwork, communication skills, and the use of information technology.

Figure 14: Level of Competencies Mastered when Studying in College and in



Workplace Expectation of Having Competency Certificates

The data revealed the workplace expectations for alums to have proof of competency ownership certificates. From the results of the 2022 Tracer Study questionnaire, it was found that as many as 28 (37%) respondents answered that the company/institution where they worked had a high level of expectation for alums to have proof of competency ownership certificate. In addition, as many as 38 (51%) respondents answered that the company/institution/institution where they work has a moderate expectation for alums to have proof of competency ownership certificate. As many as 9 (12%) respondents answered that the company/institution/institution where they work has a low level of expectation for alums to have proof of competency ownership certificate.

Figure 1: Workplace Expectations of having Competencies Certificates

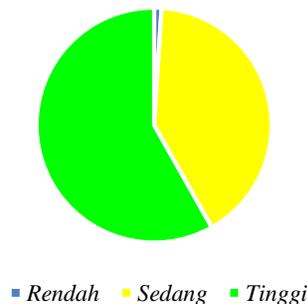
Kebutuhan Instansi/Perusahaan akan bukti sertifikat kompetensi



The Effects of Al-Islam and Muhammadiyah Development in UHAMKA towards Alumni Integrity

As many as 57 graduates stated that the development of Al-Islam and Muhammadiyah had a very high impact on the workspace. Forty respondents noted that the development of Al-Islam and Muhammadiyah had a moderate effect in shaping integrity and work ethic in today's work world. Then 1 respondent stated that the development of Al-Islam and Muhammadiyah has a low impact on shaping integrity and work ethic in today's work world.

Figure 16: The Effects of Al-Islam and Muhammadiyah towards Alumni Integrity



The Effect of AIK Development on Obedience to Worship

A total of 51 respondents stated that the development of Al-Islam and Muhammadiyah has a very strong influence on the spiritual life of each graduate, especially in the worship of God. The graph also showed that 46 respondents stated that the development of Al-Islam and Muhammadiyah obtained in college has a moderate influence on their lives in society and spiritual life, especially obedience in worship as a form of devotion as a human being to the creator. Then 1 respondent stated that the development of Al-Islam and Muhammadiyah obtained in college had a low influence on his life in society and spiritual life, especially obedience in worship as a form of devotion as a human being to the creator.

Figure 17: The Effect of AIK Development

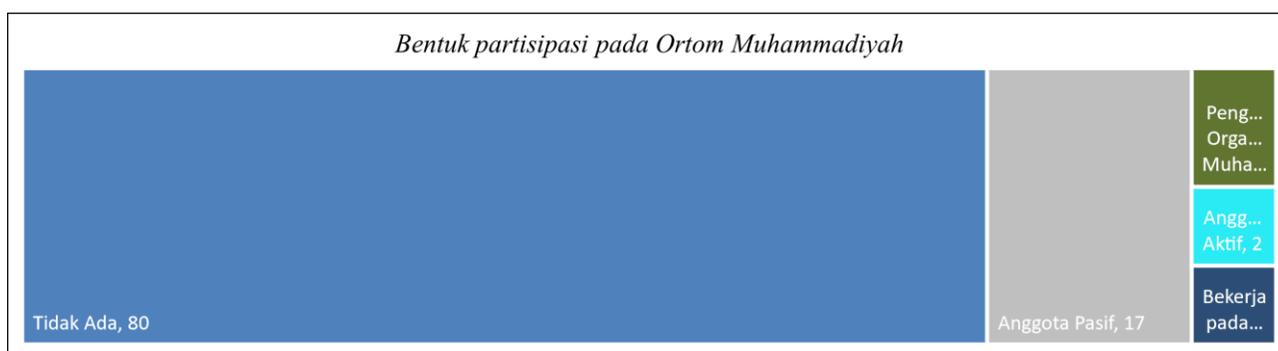
Dampak pembinaan AIK terhadap ketaatan beribadah



Alumni Participation in ORTOM

There are 3 (three) core questionnaire categories in this Tracer Study; there are ORTOM administrators, active members in Muhammadiyah leadership, and working for Muhammadiyah business charities. The results of the 2022 Tracer Study showed that out of 98 respondents, only 7 filled out this core questionnaire. Eighty respondents did not participate in ORTOM. Then 17 respondents are passive members. Of the 7 respondents, 2 alum act as active members of the nearest Muhammadiyah Leadership, 2 alum work for Muhammadiyah charities, and 3 alums as administrators of Muhammadiyah organizations or ORTOM.

Figure 2: Alumni Participation in ORTOM



Based on the results of the UHAMKA Tracer Study 2022 that has been carried out, it can be shown that Tracer Study can affect the development of academic fields, competencies, and career guidance after graduating from UHAMKA. Especially as graduates of the English Education Department 2021. The Tracer Study questionnaire consists of 5 parts: respondent identity, lectures, satisfaction with campus services, job data and alums competencies, and al-Islam Kemuhammadiyah. First, it is about alum tuition fees. It was found that most of the respondents got the source of tuition fees from their own cost. Generally, the funding comes from their parents or family. This finding is supported by Hasibuan et al., (2022) who stated that most alumni at Medan State University had covered their tuition fees at their own cost, not even from scholarships and others. However, the education cost in Indonesia is costly and slowly increasing. In the future, the university will provide the widest possible scholarship for prospective new students who meet certain standards in obtaining scholarships. In addition, the existence of university scholarships will also help underprivileged students to continue studying in college.

The next point is about the emphasis on learning methods. There is so much emphasis on learning methods at university that graduates must do, but the thing most emphasized to students is internships. This happens because the internship experience can allow graduates to see firsthand the situation at school and implement learning the teaching theories for immediate practice. Baert et al. (2021) supported this finding that job applicants with internship experience during university studies have a 12.6% higher chance of being called for a job interview than applicants without internship experience. In that way, the internship graduates have to do during college is very helpful in helping them find a real job after graduation.

The next aspect is about graduates' satisfaction with the campus services. These services include assistance to leaders, lecturers, employees, and facilities. In general, the result from the graphic showed that English Education graduates are satisfied with the services provided by the

university during their studies. The best service graduates got from the leaders was the commitment to the quality of learning. Furthermore, the highest satisfaction of alums to lecturers is in the ability of lecturers to dress neatly, behave, good speaking, and act politely to their students. The result also revealed that graduates are satisfied with the lecturer's ability to give assignments following the teaching material and their competencies with the subject. This result is in line with the student's perspective of a good university lecturer by Su & Wood (2012). They found that some important factors that can make a good university lecturer are the lecturer's knowledge of the subject and the eagerness to help students.

Moreover, in terms of employee services, employees are known to be friendly, orderly, organized, informative and communicative to students. Furthermore, the last service is about the campus' infrastructure. The facilities that alums felt the most are from good places of worship. Next is the description of the current alum activities. It can be seen that alums have different career path decisions after graduation. Based on the result, it is shown that more than 73% of alums are working full-time or part-time. The others are still looking for a job, continuing to postgraduate, being entrepreneurs, and still need to be able to work. One of the factors that made alums decide to work or not to work is the presence of complex and diverse factors that include social, contextual, and personal variables (Jimenez Vivas & Menendez Alvarez-Hevia, 2017).

Then, the current result showed that 48 (64%) respondents had a high level of conformity with the expected graduate profile target in the lecturer process. If the field of study taken during college is in line with the type of work, it will produce good output during work. It is approved by the study from Masole & van Dyk (2016) that found the strong factors of work readiness are emotional intelligence (EI), particularly emotional self-management, and psychological capital (PsyCap). There will be interpersonal anxiety at work if the job is not following the work experience. Furthermore, each alum has a period while waiting to get a job. However, a study by Caminade et al. (2016) revealed that certain abilities, such as entrepreneurial skills, communication, analytical thinking, problem-solving, and technical knowledge, could be useful in work. In other words, graduates should upgrade their skills while waiting for a job interview.

The data shows that fresh graduates earn various salaries, depending on the type of company where they work. It can be seen that graduates who do not work in the field of education get a minimum-average or above-average salary. Meanwhile, graduates who get a job in the education area earn below the minimum salary. This ensures that fresh graduates initially earn an average salary, but the more professional their work is, the more job satisfaction and salary will lead. This is supported by the results from Hsio & Lin (2018), who found that job expertise can increase salary. Therefore, graduates should continue to hone their skills at work to get job satisfaction, and their salaries will also slowly rise. From the results of the questionnaire, it was found that most of the competencies needed in the work of 2021 graduates are the ability in ethics, teamwork, communication skills, and the use of information technology. However, all of these competencies mastered by the alums are influenced by education since education is one of the important things in preparing graduates with numerous methods and learning skills (Chin et al., 2017).

In general, the impact of AIK development towards alum integrity and worship obedience shows a high impact on graduates, particularly in the workspace and alums' worship of God. The high impact of AIK's assessment of graduates is very relieving. The good values they take from learning AIK during college affect their obedience to worship as a form of human devotion to God. Nevertheless, more graduates still need to be registered or active in

Muhammadiyah organizations (ORTOM). Further research is needed to determine why students at Muhammadiyah campus do not want to be active in Muhammadiyah organization itself.

CONCLUSION

A tracer study is important to be carried out to get feedback from graduates in their efforts to improve the education system and services to shape the competencies or characters of University graduates themselves. Therefore, institutions must conduct the Tracer Study every year to evaluate graduates' assessment of university performance, employment conditions, and Al-Islam Kemuhammadiyah (AIK) activities at UHAMKA. However, the AIK development at UHAMKA has been implemented by graduates of 2021 during college, and it has proven can produce graduates with different integrity and Islamic values compared to graduates from other universities.

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