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The Utilization of Electronic Journal: Analysis of The Source of References for Thesis Writing by Students of Early Childhood Teacher Education Department

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Abstract Universitas Negeri Semarang (UNNES) through its library technical implementation unit, especially in the sector of journal developers, has subscribed to numerous journals which have international reputation such as Sage, Oxford Journal, Emerald, Cambridge Journal, Springer Link, IEEE, Sage Research Method, ProQuest, and JSTOR. The existence of these journals are able to help the academic community in learning activities and in enriching the reference in order to create scientific papers, especially thesis. The purpose of this study was to analyze the level of understanding of students in the utilization of electronic journals, to find out what reference sources are used, and to analyze how big the utilization of electronic journals was as references for thesis writing by students in the Department of ECTE. This research utilized a quantitative research method. Respondents in this study were students in the ECTE Department who were currently working on their thesis. Data collection for this study was carried out by using observation techniques and using questionnaires related to understanding and utilization of electronic journals by ECTE students. The number of respondents taken was 47 students who were working on their thesis. And the data analysis was presented by descriptive percentages. The results showed that the level of understanding of students in the utilization of electronic journals was 40.38% at the good level, 50% at the moderate level and 9.62% at the poor level. Sources of reference used by students in research are electronic journals (41.97%), books (36.63%), legislation (7.8%) and internet sources (13.63%). While the utilization of electronic journals as sources of reference used by students showed 44.23% or almost half of the references used are in the form of journals.

Keywords

Electronic journals, References, Students, Thesis.

Introduction

In 1665, scientific journals raised in the academic world as a part of the tradition of British scientists which eventually spread widely throughout the world. At the first stage, the journal was published in printed form. In the early 1990s electronic journals were developed and entered the trial stage, however at that time most people still presumed these electronic journals as future fantasy (Pendit, 2008). At that time, printed journals were indeed the focus of scientific activities and were the main collections of universities. The situation has changed nowadays, most scientific journals have been published in electronic form and some links are even available in an article which refer one text to another as more references. The existence of electronic journals is able to shift the role of printed journals which are considered to take too long in the process and require large funds for their utilization and publication (Prahastuti, 2006).

In the current era, the utilization of electronic journals is even increasing when compared to printed journals. This increment happens because of there are many advantages of electronic journals. Some of these advantages are being able to save time, money and energy. Adriaty (2006) explained that there are three advantages of electronic journals, which are: for publishers to be able to distribute journals more economically, for universities to save costs, and for writers to reduce the publishing process. Electronic journals are journals which are available electronically in a hosted online database (Lancaster, 1995). Another opinion from Jones (2009) states that electronic journals are a certain method to distribute printed journals.

In the era of information technology like nowadays, the publication of scientific papers in online form is the easiest and most affordable way. Most of universities already own or subscribe to both local and international online journal because of the needs of their lecturers and students. The academic community in universities are able to utilize electronic journals anytime and from anywhere. The existence of these electronic journals is expected to support the research and learning processes as a source of reference that can be accessed quickly and easily (Azwar and Amaliah, 2017).

From the accessibility point of view, electronic journals can be divided into two, which are *open access journals* and *closed access journals*. *Open access journals* are journals that can be accessed or downloaded freely without certain requirement to subscribe which reduce the difficulty of readers in obtaining scientific information. While *closed access journals* are journals that cannot be accessed or downloaded freely, the reader must subscribe in advance to be able to access this type of journal (Azwar, 2013). The reputation of both *open access journals* and *closed access journals* can be seen from the content contained in their published articles. An internationally reputed electronic journal is able to provide top quality and latest information. In contrast, there are also many electronic journals which are not managed optimally only able to provide less valid information and contain information which is not up to date.

UNNES through its library technical implementation unit, especially in the sector of journal developers, has subscribed to numerous journals which have international reputation such as Sage, Oxford Journal, Emerald, Cambridge Journal, Springer Link, IEEE, Sage Research Method, ProQuest, and JSTOR. The existence of these journals are able to help the academic community in learning activities and in enriching the reference in order to create scientific papers, especially thesis. The existence of these journals helps the academic community in learning activities and in enriching the reference to writing scientific papers, especially thesis. These scientific journals are closely related to role of information sources, scientific

communication which is expected to be used by the students as the latest main reference. Nowadays, journals are used as primary sources of references because scientific journals contain a collection of articles which are published periodically, written by scientists, researchers as well as academics and practitioners to report the results of their latest research. Articles which are published in scientific journals have gone through a process of rigorous peer review and tight selection process from reviewers in their respective fields. The purpose of the peer review process is to ensure that the articles published have both good quality and validity (Cahyadi, 2017).

Annual subscription to electronic journals which practiced by UNNES requires a large budget. In addition to spend budget to subscribe these electronic journals, the journal developers of the UNNES also conduct socialization activities to the academic community in the campus environment. The utilization of sources of references by students in their thesis writing can be seen in their bibliography. The bibliography is able to reflect the level of reference utilization. This is able to provide a certain analysis that can be done to determine the utilization level of sources of reference in students' thesis writing. Based on this, the authors intend to conduct research to determine the level of understanding of students in utilizing electronic journals as a source of thesis writing reference and to analyze how big the utilization of electronic journals as a source of thesis writing references by students in the Department of ECTE.

A. Research Method

The approach used in this study is quantitative research, which was chosen because quantitative research was able to take data sources and could be presented in the form of numbers. In this research, the population was all students who were working on their thesis at the Department of ECTE Faculty of Education UNNES. The sample in this study was 47 students who were currently working on their thesis at the ECTE Department. Data collection techniques with observation, questionnaires, and documentation. And data analysis was presented by descriptive percentages.

B. Discussion

Universitas Negeri Semarang has subscribed to numerous journals which have international reputation for various scientific writing purposes. Electronic journals subscribed by UNNES such as Sage, Oxford Journal, Emerald, Cambridge Journal, Springer Link, IEEE, Sage Research Method, ProQuest, and JSTOR. Electronic journals have many advantages, which are saving time, money, energy and the ability to publish on time (Rejeki, 2013). In addition, another advantage of electronic journals is its capability to be accessed from anywhere and the availability of citation or indexing facilities so that students will be able to make quotations from the system and create bibliography automatically (Tresnawan, 2004).

Electronic journals are used as the main reference by students in their thesis writing because the content of the journal is the result of research and the material is updated (Harisyah, & Azwar, 2014). The writer/user will find the latest information in accordance with scientific disciplines, in this case is scientific content about early childhood education. The understanding of ECTE Department students in the utilization of electronic journals as a reference for thesis writing is at a good level (40.38%), at a sufficient level (50%) and at a poor level (9.62%).

One indicator which can be used to measure the level of student understanding is their understanding level of the utilization of an application about reference. Reference is an important part in writing scientific papers which is used to compare various ideas which have been found by the other authors as the result of previous studies (Supianti, 2018). One popular reference application used by academics is Mendeley. Mendeley is an application which can be used on Windows, Linux, Mac, launched by Mendeley Ltd with the aim of making it easier for writers to manage their literature. This application makes it possible to work together with other authors in the preparation of articles with sharing facilities, as well as allowing to freely store data of 2GB (Salija, 2016).

The types of sources used by students as reference in thesis writing include electronic journals (41.97%), books (36.63%), legislation (7.8%) and internet sources (13.63%). Existing electronic journals which are available on the internet are widely used by writers for numerous researches. Journals are the sources that contain the numerous information and the information are up-to-date (Vickery, 1987 in Hasan, 2013). Furthermore Hasan (2013) explained that the information which are acquired by writers can be used to identify the problem, formulate the solution scientifically, determine the design of data collection, choose data analysis techniques, interpret the collected data, and integrate findings with the existing theories.

Journal databases which accessed by majority of students in the ECTE Department were Google Scholar (94.2%), SpringerLink (34.6%) and Oxford Journals (26.9%). These electronic journal database were very useful for students as references for thesis writing. The existence of Google Scholar made it very easy and quick for students to get articles in accordance with their scientific disciplines. However, the utilization of electronic journals from other databases was not very widely accessed by students because of the English used in those databases was difficult to understand and contained new terms which were not familiar by students. Even though, the electronic journals which were available in these databases might contain good quality and had been through a peer-review process (Azwar & Amaliah, 2017).

Students in the ECTE Department who were currently writing thesis had utilized a lot of electronic journals. Nearly half (44.23%) of the total references which they used for the thesis reference were from electronic journals. The utilization of electronic journals is an activity carried out by a writer in using electronic journals to search for information to support their scientific papers writing process (Sawitry, 2011). Basically the utilization of electronic journals is a kind of service in the network/online with various sources of information from the network and plays an important role in the improvement of services for writers (Harisyah and Azwar, 2015).

C. Conclusion and Suggestion

Based on the data obtained, it can be concluded that:

1. The level of understanding of ECTE Department students in the utilization of electronic journals as reference for thesis writing shows at the good level is 40.38%, understanding at the sufficient level is as much as 50%, and understanding at the poor level is 9.62%.
2. Types of sources used by students as reference in the ECTE Department for thesis writing consist of electronic journals (41.97%), books (36.63%), legislation (7.8%) and internet sources (13.6 %).

3. The utilization of electronic journals as a source used by students as references in the ECTE Department for thesis writing as much as 44.23% or almost half of all references.

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