

STUDENT RESEARCH IN SUPPORTING ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES AT THE FACULTY OF LETTERS, UMN AL-WASHLIYAH

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Abstract

This study examines the function and impact of student research in fortifying the academic framework at the Faculty of Letters, Universitas Muslim Nusantara Al-Washliyah. As a foundational aspect of the Tri Dharma of Higher Education, student research should transcend mere fulfillment of graduation criteria, functioning instead as a vital tool for intellectual growth. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach, the investigation gathers data through methods such as observation, interviews, and analysis of students' scholarly outputs. The findings reveal that these research endeavors substantially enhance information literacy, critical analytical abilities in literary and linguistic texts, and the faculty's output of scientific publications. Nonetheless, persistent barriers, including restricted access to references and challenges in time management, continue to impede progress. To elevate academic standards within the faculty, this study advocates for intensified collaboration between lecturers and students on research, alongside provision of enhanced support facilities.

Keywords: Student Research, Academic Activities, Faculty of Letters, UMN Al-Washliyah.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji fungsi dan kontribusi penelitian mahasiswa dalam memperkuat kerangka akademik di Fakultas Sastra, Universitas Muslim Nusantara Al-Washliyah. Sebagai aspek fundamental dari Tri Dharma Perguruan Tinggi, penelitian mahasiswa seharusnya melampaui sekadar syarat kelulusan, melainkan berfungsi sebagai alat vital untuk pengembangan intelektual. Dengan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif, penelitian ini mengumpulkan data melalui metode seperti observasi, wawancara, dan analisis karya ilmiah mahasiswa. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa kegiatan penelitian mahasiswa secara substansial meningkatkan literasi informasi, kemampuan analisis kritis terhadap teks sastra dan linguistik, serta produksi publikasi ilmiah fakultas. Namun, hambatan yang terus berlanjut, seperti akses terbatas terhadap referensi dan tantangan pengelolaan waktu, masih menghalangi kemajuan. Untuk meningkatkan standar akademik di lingkungan fakultas, penelitian ini merekomendasikan penguatan kolaborasi penelitian antara dosen dan mahasiswa, disertai penyediaan fasilitas pendukung yang lebih memadai.

Kata kunci: Penelitian Mahasiswa, Kegiatan Akademik, Fakultas Sastra, UMN Al-Washliyah.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the context of Higher Education 4.0, research at universities has evolved from a supplementary academic pursuit to a core element of knowledge creation and intellectual advancement. Institutions of higher learning are increasingly recognized not merely as venues for disseminating knowledge, but as hubs of innovation where students actively contribute to the generation of novel ideas and scholarly outputs. In this framework, student research assumes a pivotal function in cultivating a vibrant academic setting that promotes inquiry, critical analysis, and scholarly autonomy (*Brew, 2013; Healey & Jenkins, 2009*). At the Faculty of Literature, Universitas Muslim Nusantara Al Washliyah, student research forms an essential component of scholarly endeavors, especially in linguistics and literary studies. Students must undertake research not only to fulfill their culminating academic obligations but also to cultivate analytical and interpretive abilities. Engagement in research exposes them to diverse theoretical perspectives, encouraging their application to authentic linguistic and literary contexts, thus connecting theoretical concepts with practical realities (*Creswell, 2014*).

Moreover, student research substantially bolsters the academic culture within the faculty. A robust research environment is marked by robust engagement in intellectual discourse, the publication of scholarly works, and participation in forums such as seminars and conferences. These pursuits not only elevate students' scholarly proficiencies but also elevate the faculty's prominence and standing on national and international stages. As a result, the caliber of student research emerges as a key measure of the institution's academic distinction (*Griffiths, 2004*). Nevertheless, despite its significance, the execution of student research encounters numerous obstacles. Institutional constraints, including restricted access to scholarly materials, scarce funding for research, and inadequate support mechanisms, impede students' capacity to deliver superior work. Motivational barriers, such as diminished self-assurance, sparse prior research exposure, and insufficient mentorship, further undermine the efficacy of these initiatives (*Aditomo & Hasugian, 2018; UNESCO, 2017*). A further pressing concern involves embedding student research within wider academic practices. Ideally, research results should extend beyond mere archival storage to dissemination via publications, presentations, and collaborative efforts. Regrettably, much of this output remains underleveraged, curtailing its prospective influence on scholarly progress. This circumstance underscores the imperative for a more structured strategy to incorporate research into the academic framework.

To address these issues, it is vital to assess the prevailing practices of student research and their alignment with faculty academic functions. Such an appraisal will reveal strengths and shortcomings, facilitating the formulation of enhanced strategies to bolster student research. This evaluation is likewise crucial for aligning research efforts with institutional priorities and the overarching aims of tertiary education. Accordingly, this study examines the function and impact of student research in advancing academic pursuits at the Faculty of Literature, UMN Al Washliyah. It further identifies hurdles encountered by students in research execution and offers suggestions for elevating the quality and influence of student research in the scholarly milieu.

2. METHODOLOGY

This investigation adopts a descriptive qualitative methodology to yield a thorough comprehension of student research's role in the academic context of the Faculty of Literature, Universitas Muslim Nusantara Al Washliyah. The qualitative paradigm proves suitable, as it enables exploration of participants' experiences, viewpoints, and understandings concerning research engagements. Through descriptive scrutiny, the study delivers a detailed portrayal of student research's contributions to academic endeavors, eschewing quantitative metrics (*Creswell, 2014; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011*). Data were sourced from primary and secondary origins. Primary data emerged from semi-structured interviews with senior students and lecturers involved in undergraduate research supervision, capturing perspectives on the research trajectory, obstacles faced, and anticipated advantages. Supplementary observations illuminated the faculty's academic atmosphere and research-oriented activities. Secondary data encompassed institutional records, such as undergraduate theses, research summaries, and peer-reviewed articles housed in the faculty's archive. Analysis followed the interactive framework outlined by Miles and Huberman, encompassing three primary phases: data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion derivation/verification. In condensation, pertinent details were curated and arranged methodically. Presentation structured the data for clearer elucidation. Conclusions were inferred from emergent patterns and interconnections, validated through robust evidential backing. The inquiry's scope is confined to Faculty of Literature students at UMN Al Washliyah in the ongoing academic term (*Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014*).

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The results affirm that student research markedly advances academic functions at the Faculty of Literature, Universitas Muslim Nusantara Al Washliyah. A primary benefit lies in elevating students' information literacy. The research journey compels them to

retrieve, appraise, and integrate data from diverse scholarly repositories, such as journals, monographs, and online databases. This fosters discernment between reliable and unreliable sources, vital for scholarly composition and discourse, ultimately refining the standard of their academic outputs. Beyond information literacy, student research nurtures critical thinking, notably in linguistics and literary domains. Students dissect intricate texts, decipher interpretations, and deploy theories to concrete instances. Topics like sociolinguistic patterns in North Sumatra or semiotic examinations of literature demand profound analytical engagement, deepening comprehension and enriching dialogues between students and faculty.

Further, student research bolsters institutional accreditation and prestige. Research output, manifested in publications and conference engagements, constitutes a vital metric for evaluating tertiary institutions' caliber. Recent upticks in faculty student publications have fortified its scholarly standing, resonating with higher education's emphasis on research-infused pedagogy and distinction. Yet, the analysis uncovers impediments to research efficacy. Chief among them is constrained access to premium resources, especially international humanities journals, which curtails engagement with contemporary scholarship and analytical rigor. Students also grapple with academic writing norms and tools like Mendeley or Zotero, indispensable for coherent outputs. Time allocation poses another hurdle, as reconciling research with coursework and duties often precipitates delays. This signals the necessity for refined planning and support. Supervisory input similarly shapes research quality, emphasizing lecturer-student synergy. In sum, while student research yields considerable academic benefits, enhancements in resources, skill-building, and support are warranted. Fortifying these will maximize its role in the academic sphere and elevate higher education standards.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Student research holds an essential and irreplaceable position in bolstering academic operations at the Faculty of Literature, Universitas Muslim Nusantara Al Washliyah. Beyond graduation mandates, it functions as a key mechanism for honing intellectual faculties, encompassing information literacy, critical reasoning, and scholarly writing. Research bridges theory and praxis, augmenting overall academic prowess. It further advances faculty productivity and repute via publications and forum participation, pivotal for accreditation. The inquiry, however, exposes barriers requiring resolution to harness research potential fully. Constraints on superior resources, deficiencies in research and writing proficiency, and time management struggles predominate. These necessitate a nurturing academic milieu with ample resources, methodical oversight, and supervision.

Thus, recommendations include fostering lecturer-student partnerships, expanding digital library and journal access, and offering consistent training in research methods and writing. Such measures will optimize student research as a cornerstone for academic enhancement and tertiary excellence.

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