

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter discusses the theories of service learning, Center of Excellence as service learning, and students' perception.

2.1. Service Learning

Service learning is a program intended for students to improve and expand their academic knowledge to be applied to the surrounding community as a form of civic skills and responsibility. Likewise, Furco & Holland (2004, as cited in Zlotkowski, 2016) stated that service learning aims to immerse students in activities that develop their academic knowledge, civic involvement, and citizenship skills while also enhancing community capacity. Furthermore, the experience gained by the students in participating in service learning can improve their personality towards society itself. The attitudes and values of participants in service-learning activities may change for the better (Conner & Erickson, 2017). Besides, Casperz & Oлару (2017) stated that students' likelihood of accepting the self-responsibility to use their agency and continue to bring about social change in the future may rise as a result of service learning. Hence, through service learning, students can become agents for the future for themselves and the community around them.

Gelmon et al., (2018), stated that service learning is a teaching approach that blends community-based activities with clear academic learning goals and purposeful

reflection. Besides, the community (including governments, schools, and organizations that provide human services) and an emphasis on mutual advantage, which distinguishes an organization or educational unit/program must work together for service learning to be successful. Moreover, formal assessment exercises that incorporate community views can serve as a benchmark for enhancing the service learning partnership experience.

Furthermore, service learning is one of the most important instructional strategies that is gaining momentum on higher education (Bendy, 2016). It is because service learning combines meaningful community involvement with education and reflection to enhance the educational process, promoting civic duty, and enhancing communities. Moreover, service learning provides students with practical opportunities to study in real-world circumstances, while providing community partners with opportunity to solve pressing problems.

Besides, with studies concentrating on how the service learning project affects the growth of college participants as active members of their communities, it has grown to be a significant presence in higher education (Hildenbrand & Schultz, 2015). Due to the mutually beneficial partnership that includes practical experience and long-term community involvement, service learning is advantageous to both college students and community partners. Additionally, service learning has the potential to give aspiring teachers multicultural education experiences through

interactions with people who have lived different lives than themselves (Harrison, 2013).

2.2. Center of Excellence as Service Learning

Center of Excellence (CoE) is a School of Excellence developed by each Study Program as an effort to give students specialized skills so they can acquire competitive advantages and extra resources to compete in the global market (UMM, 2022). As service learning, CoE can provide students with the opportunity to explore new knowledge and insights by being directly involved in the community. It is because CoE provides extra competencies according to the passions of students outside the discipline they are studying, one of them is by providing professional skills that are in line with the students' interests and the needs of society.

Center of Excellence (CoE) has the potential to make students agents of change, who are more progressive with their applicative abilities (hard skills) as well as communication and social skills (soft skills) that have been obtained and developed in CoE (Program Studi Manajemen, 2022). This is certainly an effort by CoE so that students can fill the needs of human resources in the general public. CoE also aims to prepare superior seeds of future generations who are competent and ready to compete in the industrial world which can be used as provisions to become entrepreneurs, have the opportunity to work in partner companies.

The correlation between the statements by Furco & Holland (2004) and the Program Studi Manajemen (2022) lies in their shared emphasis on the development of students' skills and abilities through immersive experiences. Both service learning and the Center of Excellence (CoE) aim to provide students with opportunities to apply their academic knowledge in practical settings, thereby enhancing their applicative abilities.

Service learning, as described by Furco & Holland (2014), involves engaging students in activities that not only deepen their understanding of academic concepts but also foster their civic involvement and citizenship skills. This approach acknowledges the importance of connecting classroom learning with real-world experiences, enabling students to become active participants in their communities. By actively engaging in service projects, students develop a sense of responsibility and empathy, while also gaining valuable skills in problem-solving, communication, and collaboration.

Similarly, the Program Studi Manajemen (2022) highlights the potential of the Center of Excellence (CoE) to transform students into agents of change. The CoE provides students with an environment where they can cultivate their hard skills, such as technical expertise and practical application of knowledge. Moreover, it also emphasizes the importance of developing soft skills, including communication and social skills, which are crucial for effective collaboration and leadership.

Therefore, the correlation between the two statements as both service learning and the CoE focus on immersive experiences that enhance students' academic knowledge, applicative abilities, and soft skills. Both approaches acknowledge the importance of empowering students to become active contributors to society by providing them with the necessary skills and experiences to make a positive impact in their communities.

Furthermore, Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris (2023) stated that the purpose of the CoE program is to be able to open job opportunities for students so that they have professional skills in the world of work. CoE also prepares students to get out of their comfort zone and try new things, such as developing an entrepreneurial spirit. Therefore, graduates will get a decent job, as well as develop their entrepreneurial skills.

Center of Excellence (CoE) is to ensure that students who have graduated can train themselves so that we can produce superior human resources (Fakultas Psikologi, 2022). Besides, the world of education through CoE prepares prospective graduates to become qualified resources and ready to meet the needs of industry, the business world, and the world of work. Furthermore, the development of technology that has now penetrated all fields has placed great demands on the competency needs of university graduates.

2.3. Students' Perception

People's acquisition of knowledge or information about the outside environment is referred to as perception (Qiong, 2017). According to Cherry (2020), in addition to recognizing environmental cues and responding to them, perception is our sensory experience of the environment around us. In addition, perception is the process of a person's evaluation of a certain object, and it is thought to be seeing, integrating, and valuing physical and social objects (McDonald, 2011, as cited in Loh et al., 2023). In sum, perception is the way how people recognize knowledge or information from environmental and respond to them. Thus, student perception is the way how student recognize and respond to knowledge or information around their environment.

Najah (2007, as cited Jannah, 2019) stated that here are two types of perception, positive and negative. Positive perception is a reaction that aligns with the object of our evaluation. Negative perception, on the other hand, is the rejection or opposition of an assessed or observed object. Furthermore, McDowell & Newell (1996, as cited in Putri & Tanau, 2018) stated that cognition and affective are two perception aspects. Aspects of cognition are those that have to do with how one thinks, recognizes, and interprets a stimulus that has been received through one's five senses, experienced, or seen in daily life. The affective aspects, on the other hand, are those that support cognitive aspects and include how a person feels and displays emotions in response to a stimulus depending on the values they have, which in turn affect how they perceive the stimulus.

Likewise, findings from previous research, by Lee et al., (2018) show positive perceptions with the cognition aspect, where students have positive perceptions based on their experience. It because through service-learning, students feel more a part of the community, and develop career-related communication and problem-solving skills. In addition, the findings from Falk (2013) research also show positive perceptions with the cognition aspect, where students who have been involved in service learning give positive perceptions of service learning as a key component of good citizenship.

