

## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter consists of background of the study, research questions, purposes of study, scope of the study, and significance of the study.

#### **1.1 Background of the Study**

In this modern age, there has been a significant revolution in digital information system. The rapid development of technology especially internet technology has been widely used in various fields, one of which is the field of education (Redmond, 2011, p. 1050). The field of education use internet technology as a means of delivering information and assisting in the teaching and learning process. In addition, currently the education sector is maximizing the use of internet technology as an online learning media. The existence of internet technology has made it easier for teachers to provide learning to their students and also it has made it easier for students in obtaining learning. Therefore, the delivery of learning can't only be done directly (face-to-face), but also can be done indirectly (without face-to-face) (Lin & Zheng, 2015, p. 276).

Online learning in higher education, in the long run, is far more effective in terms of costs compared to conventional learning (offline learning). Online learning has lower costs because of a reduction in various

operational costs. While offline learning is more expensive because it involves more staff, so it requires more costs (Holmström & Pitkänen 2012, p. 9). Because of that, online learning can provide more opportunities for students to obtain learning (Lin & Zheng 2015, p. 291).

In implementing online learning in developing countries, such as Indonesia, there are often various obstacles. These obstacles include poor infrastructure and access to information, lack of support from institutions, necessary resources or internet access, poor technology skills, and so on (Holmström & Pitkänen 2012, p. 9). Besides that, there are still many teachers who have considerable doubts about the value of instructional practices in online learning. In addition, lack of preparation and readiness makes it difficult for teachers to adjust instructional practices in online learning in a traditionally structured educational environment (Baran, 2011, p. 98). In practice, teachers have to be able to design virtual learning material using communicative technology, so that it can be easily understood by students in online learning. Therefore, it is needed appropriate instructional practices and also adjustment of instructional practices from offline learning to online learning. In addition, professional development in online learning is also needed for the success of online learning itself.

Several studies on online instructional practices have been conducted within various areas. The first one is a study by DiPietro (2008) entitled *Best practices in teaching K-12 online: Lessons learned from Michigan Virtual School Teachers*. This article reports on a study of 16 virtual

school teachers from the Michigan Virtual School (MVS). It reports on best-practices from the interviews conducted with MVS teachers; and also provides research triangulation for those practices. The finding shows that the teachers' practices included classroom management strategies, pedagogical strategies (assessment, engaging students with content, making course meaningful for students, providing support, communication and community) and Technology.

The second study was carried out by Corry et al (2014) from e-learning and Digital Media Vol. 11 No. 6 entitled *Understanding Online Teacher Best Practices: a thematic analysis to improve learning*. The study was conducted to examine brick-and-mortar and online teacher best practice themes using thematic analysis and newly developed theory-based analytic process entitled Synthesized Thematic Analysis Criteria (STAC). The data consisted of published research about best practices in both brick-and-mortar and online education. Research-validated teacher best practice themes generated from this study may be considered a starting point when developing teacher best practices. When creating specialized best practices, a teacher of online education can validate the practice against the emergent best practice themes of *teacher flexibility, clear communication, relationship building, and personalized learning*.

In summary, the growing rapid of online education in Indonesia still meets challenges. One of the challenges is the lack of teachers' readiness in teaching online also there is currently little research that explains the instructional practices and teacher perceptions in online learning in Indonesia

higher education. Besides, Knowing the perceptions and beliefs of teachers enables one to make predictions about teaching practices in classrooms. In order to fill the research gap, this research needs to be done with the aim of examining instructional practices in online learning. In addition, this research also aims to examining instructional practices towards online learning and the professional development that they received and expected to receive (Lin & Zheng, 2015, 276).

## **1.2 Research Questions**

Based on the background of the study, the research questions are formulated as follows:

1. What instructional practices do the teachers use in online courses?
2. What kinds of professional development teachers received and expected to receive?

## **1.3 Purposes of the Study**

In relation with the research questions, this study is aimed at examining online teachers' instructional practices, and the professional development (PD) that they received and expected to receive.

#### **1.4 Scope of the Study**

Based on explanation above, this study focuses on teachers' perceptions of instructional practices in online higher education.

#### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

This result of the study would be beneficial to give more insight about teachers' perceptions of instructional practices in online learning. It is expected to help teachers in improving their online instructional practices, for faculty/administrator in designing and improving the professional development in online learning. This study also is expected to give more information for the next researcher who will conduct further research about online instructional practices.