

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Writing an undergraduate thesis is a complex academic task that demands not only language proficiency but also psychological endurance. The researcher observes that EFL students often experience stress, delays, or even academic burnout when completing their thesis. These challenges are primarily influenced by their level of motivation. Miranti (2022) emphasized that motivation plays a critical role in helping students persist through the demanding stages of thesis writing. Thesis writing also requires students to regulate themselves independently, planning, monitoring progress, and sustaining effort over time. This observation aligns with the findings of Mbato and Cendra (2019), who highlighted the importance of self-regulated learning strategies in academic writing among Indonesian EFL learners. To understand how motivation functions in this context, the researcher adopts the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) as a guiding framework. SDT is considered appropriate because it distinguishes between two central types of motivation commonly observed in thesis writing: intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. According to Deci and Ryan (2008), intrinsic motivation refers to engaging in an activity for the inherent satisfaction it provides, whereas extrinsic motivation is driven by external rewards or pressures.

In academic writing, especially thesis writing, both types of motivation are found to significantly influence student performance. The researcher notes that students driven by intrinsic motivation tend to display deeper engagement and ownership in their work. This is supported by Alamer (2021), who affirmed that intrinsic motivation is closely linked to increased learner autonomy and sustained academic commitment in EFL contexts. Conversely, extrinsic motivation also plays an important role. In many cases, students are influenced by external factors such as deadlines, grades, family expectations, or institutional requirements. Imtiaz et al. (2023) found that such extrinsic motivators can significantly shape students' academic behavior and learning outcomes, particularly in higher education. The researcher also finds that some students seek academic support beyond the formal

supervision system. Many turn to private tutors or informal mentors for help during the thesis writing process. These forms of support, although non-institutional, appear to offer personalized academic guidance that positively affects students' motivation and progress. Schugurensky (2000) referred to this kind of learning support as non-formal education, an educational activity that occurs outside traditional institutional frameworks.

This issue becomes particularly important to investigate based on a phenomenon observed by the researcher at one university in Tasikmalaya, where several EFL students were able to complete their undergraduate theses in a relatively short time, sometimes within just a few months. This unusual achievement appears to be influenced by a combination of strong internal and external motivational forces, possibly reinforced by non-formal academic support systems. To better understand this situation, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with students from the English Education Department. It was revealed that their motivation stemmed from different sources. Some were intrinsically motivated by a personal interest in their research topic or a strong desire to accomplish academic goals. In contrast, others were extrinsically driven by external expectations, academic deadlines, or the desire to satisfy their families and supervisors.

The previous study about the issue was conducted Muhammadin and Herda (2024) focused on the general aspects, emphasizing motivational influences in language learning and classroom participation. However, they do not specifically examine the role of motivation in the context of undergraduate thesis writing, a unique and a highly demanding academic task that requires sustained self-regulation and perseverance. In this research, the researcher focuses on how intrinsic and extrinsic motivation influence EFL students' ability to complete their undergraduate thesis, thus offering deeper insights into motivational dynamics in academic writing settings.

B. Formulation of the Problem

The formulation of the problem of this study is “What are the motivations that drive the students to complete their thesis writing?”

C. Operational Definitions

1. Motivation

Motivations in this study are the driving forces that influence EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students during the process of writing their undergraduate thesis. These driving forces may originate from internal sources (such as personal interest and satisfaction) or external ones (such as expectations and rewards). Understanding the types of motivation that students experience can provide insights into their academic behavior, performance, and completion of thesis writing.

2. Intrinsic Motivation

Intrinsic motivation is the internal drive that comes from within the students themselves, such as interest in the research topic, curiosity, enjoyment of the writing process, and a sense of personal achievement. Intrinsic motivation is a pivotal factor in the process of writing undergraduate theses, particularly among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students. It refers to the internal drive to engage in a task for the inherent satisfaction and enjoyment it brings, rather than for external rewards or pressures.

3. Extrinsic Motivation

Extrinsic motivation is the external drive that comes from outside the students, including factors such as pressure from supervisors, expectations from family, the need to graduate on time, and external rewards such as grades or academic recognition. Unlike intrinsic motivation, which is driven by personal interest or satisfaction, extrinsic motivation is influenced by external rewards or pressures, such as achieving tangible outcomes, meeting expectations, or avoiding negative consequences.

4. Thesis Writing

Thesis writing in this study is an academic journey that undergraduate EFL students undertake as part of completing their final research project. It involves identifying a research problem, conducting a literature review, collecting and analyzing data, and presenting findings in a formal written

document. As an academic task, thesis writing demands critical thinking, time management, language proficiency, and sustained motivation. Within the context of this research, thesis writing is not only a measure of academic competence but also a context through which students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivations can be observed and analyzed.

D. Aim of the Study

The aim of this study is to explore and identify the types of motivation, both intrinsic and extrinsic, that drive EFL (English as a Foreign Language) undergraduate students to complete their thesis writing. By examining the internal and external motivational factors that influence students' engagement in the thesis process, this study seeks to understand how motivation operates within the context of academic writing in higher education. The research aims to provide deeper insight into the personal and environmental influences that contribute to students' persistence, effort, and completion of their undergraduate thesis. Through this investigation, the study also aims to inform educators and academic supervisors about the motivational dynamics that can support students more effectively during the thesis writing journey.

E. Significance of the Study

1. Theoretical Significance

This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge in educational psychology and second language acquisition by providing deeper insights into the role of motivation, particularly intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, in academic writing. It supports and expands upon motivational theories such as Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) within the context of EFL undergraduate thesis writing.

2. Practical Significance

The findings of this study can be useful among students by understanding what motivates students intrinsically and extrinsically. Educators can create more supportive environments that encourage students to complete their thesis more effectively and with greater enthusiasm.

3. Empirical Significance

This study will empirically provide data-driven insights into the real experiences of EFL students during thesis writing. It serves as a case-based reference for future researchers interested in motivation in higher education settings. The research can also be used as a comparative study base for similar investigations in other universities or educational contexts.