

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a comprehensive description of the research study. It includes the background of study, problem formulation, operational definition, research objectives, and research significance.

1.1. Background of The Study

Undergraduates in Indonesia are required to write a thesis as part of their university graduation requirements. According to Khusniyah and Ismiyatun (2024), undergraduates are required to prepare a research paper known as a thesis in order to fulfill the requirements of their degree. The thesis writing process typically involves several stages, including choosing a topic, determining research methods, developing instruments, collecting and analyzing data, and compiling a research report. According to Srantih (2014) students can experience stress and anxiety due to internal difficulties working on the thesis, such as difficulties determining the background of the problem, theory and methodology, facing fear of lecturer, boredom, laziness and so on. The typical length of time spent studying for an undergraduate degree in Indonesia is four years; some students manage to complete their theses on time, while others require longer. Those students who finish their degrees in four years or less are considered to have graduated on time, whereas those who spent more than four years in college are considered to have graduated late (Amin et al., 2013).

Writing an undergraduate thesis is often the most challenging task for students due to its extensive scope, requirement for independent research, high academic standards, and the need to balance it with other responsibilities while managing time effectively over an extended period. Research indicates that students struggle with various aspects, including research methodology, English proficiency, time management, and topic selection (Benavente et al., 2022; lestari, 2020). There are a lot of undergraduate students struggling with

various problems, particularly while preparing their undergraduate theses. Peng (2018) revealed that students began to experience various difficulties from the early stages of writing a thesis. Given these challenges, it becomes crucial to understand the factors that could help students overcome these difficulties and successfully complete their theses, with motivation being one of key element in this process.

Motivation can take the form of an individual's intrinsic desire to achieve or external cues from their surroundings. Souders (2019) argued that intrinsic motivation is the drive to effect personal or societal change. A desire to do something is the basic source of motivation, which is why it is crucial for students to have motivation in order to reach their goals. Because it keeps them on track to achieve their goals, motivation is a critical component that influences students' performance (Nou, 2015). Students who are writing their theses often face various obstacles when collecting the data, complicated analysis, or repeated revisions, deadline pressure, expectations from supervisors or family members, and comparison with peers' progress can lead to stress and anxiety, which in turn can erode their motivation and cause delay in completing their theses. According to Nouri and Saqr (2019), motivation stands as a crucial variable in the process of undergraduate thesis writing to prevent delays in thesis submission and influence completion time. Therefore, motivation appears as an important factor in students' success in managing the complexity of thesis writing and accomplishing their academic objectives.

There are still many students who have not completed their theses due to motivation factors that influence the process of writing their theses. A recent study that conducted by Diasti and Mbato (2020) reported that many students in Indonesian universities delay to complete their theses, particularly because they have motivation issues in writing undergraduate thesis. However, there are students who manage to complete their theses writing on time even though they were working during the process of completing their theses, largely because they are able to maintain and enhance their motivation throughout the

process. Meanwhile, Sabti et al., (2019) also noted that students with high motivation employ various strategies to achieve academic success, increasing their chances of excelling in writing tasks. This variation in students' ability to complete their theses highlights the importance of understanding the different types of motivation that drive academic success.

Students' motivation stems from both inside and outside influences. According to research (Budiharto and Amalia, 2019; Ryan and Deci, 2000), there are two main categories of motivation: Intrinsic and extrinsic. The term of "intrinsic motivation" describes the inner forces that push a person to act. Meanwhile, the term "extrinsic motivation" refers to the impact that factors outside of an individual's control have on their behavior. According to Handriana et al., (2013) students can be motivated to learn through extrinsic factors such as praise, prizes, grades, and a fun learning environment, while intrinsic factors include pleasure, desire, attitude, and interest. In conclusion, motivation emerges as a critical factor in the thesis writing process, significantly influencing students' ability to complete their work timely, while many Indonesian students struggle with thesis completion due to motivational issues, some successfully manage to finish their theses on time, even while working, by maintaining high levels of motivation.

Based on preliminary observations conducted by the researcher, it was found that several final-year students at a university in Tasikmalaya were engaged in additional activities outside of their academic responsibilities. For example, there are two students who, while completing their undergraduate thesis, also worked as a barista in a coffee shop and while the other was employed as a radio announcer, often taking on long shifts and managing significant workloads outside of their academic life. In addition to these jobs, both participants were actively involved in other activities. They participated in the *Kampus Mengajar* (Campus Teaching) program and one of them also held positions in the Student Legislative Organization. Despite these demanding roles, they successfully completed their theses on time, allowing

them to graduate without delay. This success can largely be attributed to their strong motivation, which appears to be a crucial factor in the thesis writing process. This conclusion is in line with Budiana and Djuwari (2018) found, who emphasize that motivation plays a pivotal role in the learning process. Thus, in this study, “motivation” encompasses both the internal and external forces that push students to finish their theses, even when balancing additional responsibilities.

Several studies concerning undergraduate students’ motivation for writing theses were located by the researcher. The first study to investigate writing motivation in an Indonesian setting was that of Cahyono and Rahayu (2020), who set out to determine whether there was a connection between writing motivation and writing competency among EFL students. Notable gender inequalities were seen in both writing motivation and skill among EFL students, according to the study. In another study conducted by Lestari (2020), “the research investigated difficulties faced by undergraduate students thesis writing at Muhammadiyah University Bengkulu’s English Study Program”. The results highlighted various challenges, with language skills and time management emerging as the most critical areas requiring support and attention. The other related study concerning was conducted by Mbato and cendra (2019), the aim of this study is to examined self-regulation, help-seeking, and motivation maintenance among Indonesian EFL undergraduate students during thesis writing. Findings indicated that students generally exhibited high levels of these traits, suggesting effective self-regulatory strategies in the thesis writing process.

Based on those studies (Cahyono and Rahayu, 2020; Lestari, 2020; Mbato and Cendra, 2019), it is clear that while some research has addressed general motivation or strategies to maintain it during thesis writing, there is still a lack of comprehensive exploration of the specific intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors that drive students to complete their undergraduate theses successfully. Moreover, limited number of the existing studies have paid

sufficient attention to students who balance academic responsibilities with work commitments—a common reality for many Indonesian undergraduates today. Therefore, this research aims to fill this gap by deeply exploring what intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors enable students to complete their undergraduate theses on time while managing additional responsibilities outside their academic life.

1.2. Formulation of the Problem

The research question of the study is “What motivational factors contribute to the successful completion of writing undergraduate thesis among undergraduate students who balance academic responsibilities with work commitments?”

1.3. Operational Definitions

The researcher provides two definitions related to this study to avoid misunderstanding about the terms set out in this study as follows;

1.3.1 Students’ Motivation

Students’ motivation in this study refers to the driving forces that influence their willingness, determination and enthusiasm to engage in and complete their theses work. It encompasses a combination of internal desires and external pressures that stimulate and sustain their efforts to accomplish a thesis.

1.3.2 Writing Undergraduate Thesis

Writing undergraduate thesis is a research project completed by undergraduate students during their final year of English education department at one of university in Tasikmalaya, Indonesia. An undergraduate thesis serves as the culmination of students’ academic learning, typically involving original research or in-depth analysis within their field of study.

This process requires competencies in both research methodology—adhering to the Introduction, Methods, Results, and Discussion (IMRaD) format for structuring research reports—and thesis writing process, which encompasses generating ideas, drafting, reviewing, editing, and publishing.

1.4. Aim of the Study

This research aims to explore the motivational factors that drive working students to successfully complete their writing undergraduate theses while managing multiple responsibilities.

1.5. Significances of the Study

1.5.1 Theoretical Uses

This research will enrich the literature related to motivation in the specific context especially in EFL thesis writing.

1.5.2 Practical Uses

This research will provide some insights for institution, supervisor, and undergraduate students in order to find out the appropriate guidance to maintain the motivation in writing their theses.

1.5.3 Empirical Uses

This research will provide empirical insights for the researcher about students' motivation in writing undergraduate thesis.