

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

In the context of academic writing, the ability to reference accurately and appropriately is a crucial skill that plays a significant role in the quality and credibility of scholarly work. As noted by Fadda (2012), accurate references are essential for producing high-quality academic papers. However, referencing is frequently perceived as a challenging aspect of academic work, particularly for undergraduate students who are in the process of developing their ability to write in an academic way. The difficulty often leads to errors, inconsistencies, or even unintentional plagiarism. This highlights that referencing is one of the most challenging aspects of academic writing for undergraduate students.

Mendeley is known as reference management software that has gained popularity among students and academics, particularly in facilitating the organization and citation of sources in scientific writing. This is supported by the view expressed by Nitsos et al. (2022) that a number of universities worldwide have adopted Mendeley as a reference tool for students at the graduate level. Mendeley is an application that can be integrated with Microsoft Office Word, thereby streamlining the management of references and the creation of bibliographies for the scientific papers that will be compiled (Mardin et al., 2020) (B. Y. Wahyuningsih et al., 2021). In the context of the necessity for proficient and accurate academic writing, the ability to utilize tools such as Mendeley is highly beneficial for students in addressing their reference requirements in an appropriate and efficient manner. Santosa et al. (2021) found that students have a strong agreement that the utilization of Mendeley is advantageous in the context of thesis writing, citing that it makes the process of referencing sources more efficient compared to the traditional manual method. Similarly, studies by Ariyanti and Fitriana (2020) indicated that students perceive Mendeley as a more convenient tool for citing theories than the traditional manual citation method. Thus, Mendeley is thought to assist users in terms of time efficiency, the reduction of research

duplication, and the improvement of information literacy skills (MacMillan, 2012). These findings suggest that Mendeley facilitates the citation process, making it more user-friendly for students.

Despite the advantages, the use of Mendeley is not without challenges. Some students struggle with limited knowledge of citation style, lack of familiarity with reference management system, or lack of support from librarians (Rangaswamy & Rajendra, 2021). This underlines the need to gain a deeper understanding of the reasons behind users' perceptions of Mendeley. Similarly, Ariyanti and Fitriana (2020) found that EFL students encounter a number of challenges, including difficulties in managing citations and references in their writing.

The issue raised in this research is that the lack of knowledge among students regarding how to manage citations and references effectively. Consequently, they tend to employ a manual method, which has the potential to impact the quality of their academic work. The use of manual methods for citing and referencing is an inherently risky practice (Santosa et al., 2021). It is possible that students may neglect to include citations and references in their writing, which could result in plagiarism (Ariyanti & Fitriana, 2020). Furthermore, the manual method increases the likelihood of errors and inconsistencies in the citations and references.

This issue is significant because the use of Mendeley as a reference management tool is crucial to enhance the efficiency of academic writing through the automation of reference management and citation. In addition, Mendeley helps produce more accurate and consistent citations, thus improving the quality of scientific work. The utilization of technology such as Mendeley also encourages students to be more receptive to the use of technology in the learning process, making the learning more effective. It is essential to comprehend the obstacles encountered by students when utilizing Mendeley, as this can provide a deeper insight into the tool's acceptance within the academic context.

Several studies have demonstrated the utilization of Mendeley in facilitating the academic referencing process, yet most employ quantitative or mixed-method approaches. For example, a quantitative study by Ariyanti and Fitriana (2020) assessed EFL students' perceptions regarding the utilization of Mendeley as a

reference tool in thesis writing. Furthermore, Zahro and Nugraha (2021) conducted a quantitative study that employed the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) to examine the utilization of Mendeley among students. Meanwhile, the study conducted by Santosa et al. (2021) employed a mixed-method approach to assess the perceptions of EFL students regarding the utilization of Mendeley in the context of thesis writing. In a recent study, Muzammil et al. (2024) employed a mixed-method approach to investigate students' behavioral intentions regarding the utilization of Mendeley. Although previous studies offer valuable insights into students' acceptance and utilization of Mendeley, most of them rely on quantitative and mixed-method approaches. However, these approaches are limited in capturing why and how students develop their perceptions while navigating the benefits and challenges of using the tool. Therefore, this research aims to fill this gap by employing a qualitative approach to more comprehensively understand students' perceptions of Mendeley, thereby uncovering the challenges and benefits felt directly by undergraduate students in their academic context. By exploring the perspectives of undergraduate students, this research seeks to provide deeper insight that cannot be captured through quantitative measures alone.

Therefore, this research aims to explore undergraduate students' perceptions of Mendeley as a reference management tool within the context of academic referencing. Using a descriptive qualitative approach supported by semi-structured interviews, this study seeks to capture students' detailed insights regarding the benefits, challenges, and factors shaping their perceptions of Mendeley.

B. Formulation of the Problems

Based on the background described above, this study seeks to answer the following research question:

What are undergraduate students' perceptions of Mendeley as a tool for academic referencing in writing a research proposal?

C. Operational Definitions

1. Undergraduate Students' Perceptions

The term undergraduate students' perception is used to describe how students perceive Mendeley as a reference tool and how they perceive the benefits and challenges of using Mendeley as a reference tool in the context of their academic needs.

2. Academic Writing

The term academic writing refers to students' ability to produce a proposal that demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of the principles of writing, including the implementation of formal language, and conforms to relevant academic standards.

3. Academic Referencing

The term academic referencing refers to the process of listing the sources of information using the Mendeley Reference Management Software, specifically in thesis writing, which is carried out by students. The aim of this process is to respect and recognize the work of the primary or original author, to strengthen the credibility of the research, and to provide a clear reference to the sources used.

4. Mendeley

Mendeley is defined as software used by undergraduate students designed to organize, store, manage, and cite references. It can be considered a tool that enhances the efficiency of academic writing and simplifies the process of creating a reference list.

D. Aim of the Study

The aim of this research is to explore the perceptions of undergraduate students regarding Mendeley in managing academic references during the writing of

research proposals in the qualitative course. In specific terms, the study seeks to achieve a deeper understanding of students' views on the usefulness, challenges, and perceptions of utilizing Mendeley for the management of citations and references in academic work.

E. Significance of the Study

1. Practical Significance

The result of this research is intended to offer practical benefits to students and teachers by enhancing the efficiency achieved through the utilization of Mendeley as a reference management tool. This research will present possible strategies that may facilitate a reduction in the time and effort expended in the academic writing process.