

The Analysis of Students' Difficulties in Completing Thesis During the Pandemic Period

¹Fauziah, ²Zaiturrahmi & ³Jamaliah

^{1,2,3}University of Jabal Ghafur, Indonesia

fziah05@yahoo.com, zaiturrahmi@unigha.ac.id, jamaliah@unigha.ac.id

*Corresponding Author : fziah05@yahoo.com

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Abstract

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This study aims to determine the difficulties faced by students of the Jabal Ghafur University English Education Study Program in conducting research and writing reports as their final project during the pandemic. This type of research is descriptive research. The subjects of this study were undergraduate students of the English education study program who were undergraduate thesis guidance in 2020. Data collection in this study used questionnaires and documents. The questionnaire is given to students who are writing their thesis. Data were analyzed using percentage techniques which were further described. The results of the study generally show that there are various kinds of difficulties faced by students in conducting research during the pandemic, both academically and non-academically. About 81.8% difficulties in the academic field and 18.2% in non-academic difficulties. Academic difficulties are caused by challenges of adapting research topics to the current situation, writer's block, lack of understanding of research methods and academic writing styles. In non-academic fields, student difficulties are dominated by personal readiness. The research results are expected to be input, information and reference to the English Education Study Program of Jabal Ghafur University so that the factors of student difficulties in completing their thesis in the new normal period can be overcome.

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1. Introduction

One of the obligations for every student in taking undergraduate education to obtain a bachelor's academic degree is to write a final report (thesis). According to (Alwasilah & Alwasilah, 2005). There is a Lesson Learned which is very valuable in completing this scientific paper starting from the process of writing a proposal, research and writing a final report, among others; practice to make plans according to abilities and interests, practice critical thinking skills when reviewing literature, practice the ability to paraphrase quotes from sources read, and evidence of recognition as a new academic community. In going through this process, there are many things that students must go through regarding non-academic and academic problems.

In terms of non-academic problems, to build self-confidence in writing a thesis a person must have a capable self-assessment, support from family and the readiness of the writer to face challenges and obstacles in writing a final report. (Emilia, 2012). The various conditions of students at Jabal Ghafur University such as studying while working and family backgrounds, not all of which support student activities in completing the final report, these non-academic factors are among the things to be considered. Building self-confidence is one of the keys to student success in completing final reports. A good sense of self confidence constructs students' readiness to face the challenges faced during the writing process. Thus, there are many reasons that need to be considered and are very influential on student thesis writing.

From an academic point of view, students who are going to write a thesis must also pay attention to the selection of topics for research, plan a realistic time frame and understand matters related to writing scientific papers. Without this, it is impossible for students to finish their studies on time. In this case, the thesis supervisor plays a very important role in completing the final report for students (Indarto, 2012; Lestari, 2012; Ratminingsih et al., 2018; Rismen, 2015). Not a few final year students have problems with their supervisors. This shows that a supervisor is very influential in determining the success of students in completing their thesis. In other words, in addition to students' personal readiness, academic readiness also greatly determines student success in completing research final projects.

The obligation to write a thesis for all students majoring or program in all undergraduate (Bachelor) pathways at public and private universities is an obligation. This provision is based

on the consideration that students as prospective scholars (scientists) must be able to make scientific works as a form of actualization of one's knowledge.(Emilia, 2012). This course is a compulsory subject that must be mastered by students with the intention that they have signs or guidelines to become part of the academic community.

According to (Emilia, 2012)There are several aspects that must be considered before conducting research, namely readiness to face challenges, building self-confidence, and self-evaluation. This is part of the non-academic factors. Meanwhile, academic factors start from topic selection to writing the final research report. Including the importance of the role of supervisor and student understanding of research methods.

The potential and abilities possessed by each individual are different. One thing that is important to do is self-evaluation. Evaluation means measuring or assessing everything that has been done and also making anticipations and being careful of something that might happen(Dolosic, 2018). Thus, each individual realizes that maybe we cannot control the situation in the environment around us, but can improve themselves as much as possible(Yan & Brown, 2017). In this case, it can be said that by conducting self-evaluation students can correctly determine the abilities, circumstances and challenges to be faced (Panadero, Brown, & Strijbos, 2016).

Self-confidence is an important element that colors human feelings. With self-confidence, a person will be better able to adjust to a new environment (Mulyono & Saskia, 2020). That way, the individual will easily mingle and adapt to everything he wants and belief in the role he is playing (Jahanbakhsh, Jomehri, & Mujembari, 2015). This is what makes the individual able to develop himself, accept the situation and think positively to act to achieve various goals in his life (Kisac & Slave, 2014). By having a good sense of self confidence, students should be ready to face the challenges faced during the writing process. Thus, there are many reasons that need to be considered and are very influential on student thesis writing.

The ability to face challenges is part of the attitude that a student must have. Not infrequently the habit of delaying writing a thesis arises because of the challenge of lack of references or finding dead ends in analyzing data that has been obtained from the research results. With good self-readiness, students can regain their self-confidence after facing even tough challenges. This is due to their self-assessment abilities.

In the academic realm, this step begins with making proposals as a plan that supports the success of a research. The proposed framework consists of; Title, research, problem background, problem formulation, discussion of relevant theories, formulation of the conceptual framework used, preparation and submission of hypotheses if any, determining population, using samples and respondents, setting and compiling instruments, how to collect data, and how to analyze data. Determining the topic you want to research and study is the first step that must be taken to make a research proposal. Choosing a topic that matches their interests and areas of interest will make students feel satisfied to find answers to their curiosity.

Good mastery of research methodology is the main asset in writing a thesis. Because there are many types of research that require multiple approaches, students experience difficulties in determining the type of research with a particular approach. There are many books on research methods, but students still find it difficult to understand and understand, let alone apply it completely and thoroughly, because in applying it requires a thorough understanding from the beginning of planning to the preparation of the final report on the research results. This is where the role of the supervisor is considered very important. The supervisor directs the theory in the book to be practiced by the students under him.

After finishing analyzing the data, the next step which is no less important is to conclude and give suggestions after that it is followed by writing a research report which must follow the standard rules of grammar in English, both format, grammar, vocabulary, spelling, punctuation, numbering, citation, writing bibliography references, appendices by following standard rhetoric steps from each institution and others, for example following APA principles (American Psychological Association: 1987) or Proposal Writing Guidelines and Research Reports.

The COVID-19 pandemic affects all walks of life. This has a big influence in the world of education. As a result, the government temporarily suspended face-to-face learning activities at all levels of educational institutions starting mid-March 2020. This problem becomes a challenge in itself for final year students who are doing research at school. A pre-planned research plan cannot be implemented in pandemic conditions. Various challenges come and the process that must be passed to conduct research and write a thesis becomes longer. This certainly has an impact on the student's study period. This study aims to analyze the difficulties of students doing research and writing a thesis in the English Education Study Program of Jabal Ghafur University.

2.Method

The implementation of this research was carried out in the English Education Study Program of the Jabal Ghafur Sigli University in 2020. The respondents of this study were undergraduate students of the English Education Study Program who were conducting thesis guidance. The instruments used to collect data in this study were questionnaires and documents. The questionnaire is given to students who are writing their thesis. This questionnaire consists of: the process of selecting research titles and guidance, difficulties in the process of collecting and processing data, and the process of improving the thesis. While the document is used to analyze the guidance process, difficulties in the process of collecting and processing data, and the process of improving the thesis.

Data analysis techniques were carried out by percentage and descriptive analysis(Gomez, 2013). These activities include activities to find, and select data that is relevant to the research problem that has been determined; then try to understand (descriptive analysis) and criticize (critical analysis), then compare (comparative analysis) one information with other information based on the results of critical analysis to obtain credible information, and finally synthesize the information into solid conclusions, as a construct new which is different from previous thoughts(Nurkamto, 2020).

3.Results

After analyzing student theses, several findings were obtained according to several predetermined categories, namely academic and non-academic difficulties of students completing their thesis during pandemic. From the academic aspect, it was found that students experienced difficulties in several things, namely regarding topic selection, schedule planning, understanding research methods, understanding academic writing style and how to analyze graduated theses. Meanwhile, non-academically, the difficulty refers to self-evaluation, building self-confidence and the ability to face challenges. Table 1 is the result of the data obtained in this study.

No	Difficulty Aspects	Percentage
1	Academic	81.8
	- Choose a Topic	10
	- Planning the Schedule	15, 8
	- Understand Research Methods	30
	- Understand Academic Writing Style	22
	- Analyzing the Thesis that Has Been Passed	8
2	Non-Academic	18.2
	- Self-assessment	11
	- Builds Self Confidence	2,2
	- Ability to Face Challenges	5
Total		100%

Table 1. Difficulties for Students in Completing Thesis in Pandemic Period

Based on the data in table 1, it can be seen that academic difficulties reached 81.8% followed by non-academic difficulties at 18.2%. Of the overall difficulties experienced by English study program students while conducting research during the pandemic, academic difficulties are very prominent. The following will describe the difficulties experienced by students academically starting from the largest percentage.

30% of students' difficulties are understanding the method of writing scientific papers and understanding academic writing style, which is 22%. Writing a thesis is not like writing a free essay. These two things are defined by standard rules about authorship. As previously mentioned, mastery of research methodology is the main asset in writing a thesis. But because there are many types of research with various approaches, students find it difficult to determine the type of research with a certain approach.

Next is planning a schedule of 15.8%, good planning of a study is closely related to the timeliness of completing the study. The pandemic emergency situation has its own impact on final year students. They repeatedly adjusted the research schedule to the situation and conditions in the field. Another difficulty is choosing a topic of 10%. Since many schools were closed, there were some students who had to review the topics they submitted at the time of the proposal. Finally, the difficulty in analyzing the thesis that has passed is 8%.

As much as 18.2% of non-academic difficulties were related to students' personal readiness in conducting research and completing their final reports. These abilities include self-evaluation, self-confidence and the ability to face the challenges of situations and conditions in the midst of a pandemic.

4.CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion of the research that has been carried out, there are several conclusions regarding the results of this study, including:

1. The difficulties students experience in conducting research during the pandemic are very complex, both academically and non-academically. Students face more academic problems.
2. The results of this study can be a reference for policy makers and the fluency of students in writing theses in facing the new era at the level of the English Education Study Program.

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