

AN ANALYSIS ON FACTORS CAUSING UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS' DIFFICULTIES IN WRITING THESIS

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Abstract: The purpose of this research is to find out the most causing factor of undergraduate students' difficulties in writing thesis in the English Education Study Program of FKIP Tanjungpura University Pontianak. Descriptive research design was used in this research. 28 students were chosen as the sample and selected by using purposive sampling. The data was collected by using questionnaire with 31 items designed on a five-point likert-type scale to capture students' opinion about the causing factors of their difficulties in writing thesis. Data analysis shows that basic knowledge of thesis main components factor has percentage 27.68%, process of consultation factor has percentage 26.04%, psychological factor has percentage 25.25%, while economic factor has percentage 21.03%. Therefore, it is concluded that basic knowledge of thesis main component factor is the most causing factor of students' difficulties in writing thesis.

Keywords: factors, difficulties, thesis

Abstrak: Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk menemukan faktor yang paling menyebabkan mahasiswa Prodi Bahasa Inggris FKIP Universitas Tanjungpura kesulitan dalam menulis skripsi. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah metode deskriptif. 28 siswa dipilih menjadi sample menggunakan sample purposif. Data dikumpulkan menggunakan angket yang berjumlah 31 item didesain berdasarkan 5 poin skala likert untuk menangkap opini mahasiswa mengenai faktor-faktor yang menyebabkan mereka kesulitan dalam menulis skripsi. Data analisis menunjukkan bahwa faktor pengetahuan dasar dari komponen utama skripsi mendapat persentase 27.68%, faktor proses konsultasi mendapat persentase 26.04%, faktor psikologi mendapat persentase 25.25%, sedangkan faktor ekonomi mendapat persentase 21,03%. Oleh karena itu, disimpulkan bahwa faktor pengetahuan dasar dari komponen utama skripsi adalah faktor yang paling menyebabkan mahasiswa kesulitan dalam menulis skripsi.

Kata kunci: faktor, kesulitan, skripsi

Writing is one of the productive skills, besides speaking, which involves a complex process. Writing might be the most complicated skill among the other skills (listening, speaking, and reading). According to Mertens (2010: vii), "Writing is a

complex and cognitively demanding activity.” Oshima and Hogue (2007:15) mentioned four steps of the writing process: prewriting, organizing, writing, and revising and editing. Writing requires not only one process, before the writer begins to write, the writer should create idea and organize it. After the writer has finished writing, the writer should polish his/her writing by editing and revising.

Students of English Education Study Program in the FKIP Tanjungpura University Pontianak face some kinds and levels of writing subjects such as Writing for General Communication for the very first writing subject they have to take. There are also other subjects such as Paragraph Writing, Essay Writing and other subjects, which cannot be separated from writing. In the last, they have to write their research report (thesis) as one of the requirements to have bachelor (sarjana) degree.

Thesis writing is an academic writing that is in context of the academic environment. Oshima and Hogue (2007:3) stated that academic writing itself is the kind of writing used in high school and college classes. It is different from creative writing, which is the kind of writing stories, and it is also different from personal writing, which is the kind of writing letters or e-mails. Oshima and Hogue (2007:3) added that academic writing is formal, so the writer should not use slang or contractions. In addition, the writer should take care to write complete sentences and to organize them in a certain way.

Thesis writing is a research report that is written by college students who want to get bachelor (sarjana) degree. According to Murray (2011:2), “Thesis is a far bigger project than most students will ever have undertaken before, it requires more independent study, more self-motivation.” In addition, Berndtsson, et al (2008:4) stated that the thesis project was probably the biggest project that students would have undertaken in students’ academic life. In line with those two ideas, Paltridge and Starfield (2007:25) stated that for all students, writing a thesis is a challenge; for those writing in English whose first language is not English, the challenges are even greater. No doubt, that thesis writing is not an easy project to be done and it is more challenging among the other types of writing for the students.

Regular B students of English Education Study Program in the FKIP Tanjungpura University Pontianak seem to have difficulties in writing thesis. It showed from the data that the writer got from academic staff of English Education Study Program. There were 91 Regular B students of English Education Study Program who have been learning at FKIP Tanjungpura University more than five years and have not finished their study. Then, the writer was curious to know about causing factors of students’ difficulties in writing thesis.

A research conducted by Dwihandini et al (2013) on undergraduate students in the English Department of Mahasaraswati University analyzed three factors that considered as potential causing factors of students’ difficulties in writing thesis, namely psychological factors, sociocultural factors, and linguistic factors. The finding of the research showed that the main cause of students’ difficulties in writing thesis in the psychological factor was self-esteem. While the main cause of students’ difficulties in writing thesis in the sociocultural factor was found in the communicative competence. Nonetheless, the main cause of students’ difficulties in writing thesis in the linguistic factor was found in domain and extent error analysis. Similar research conducted by Alafgani (2013) in order to fulfil the requirement to get bachelor degree,

he analyzed three major factors: basic knowledge of thesis factors, process of consultation factors, and social academic environment factors. He found that the process of consultation was the most factor causing students' difficulty in writing thesis.

This research analyzed four major factors that considered as potential factors causing students' difficulties in writing thesis. These four factors are basic knowledge of thesis main components factors, process of consultation factors, psychological factors, and economic factors. Basic knowledge of thesis main components factor is classified into five indicators which are related to students' capability in writing each main component of thesis, namely writing introduction chapter, writing literature review chapter, writing methodology chapter, writing result chapter, and writing conclusion chapter. Process of consultation factor is divided into understanding and doing supervisors' suggestion/feedback, and availability of time for discussing. Psychological factor is divided into three indicators, namely motivation, self-esteem, and anxiety. While economic factor is divided into managing time as a college students and a worker, and making the first priority between finishing study and working. The data of this research is collected by using questionnaire in order to find out which factor is most causing students' difficulty in writing research report (thesis) in the English Education Study Program of FKIP Tanjungpura University Pontianak.

METHODOLOGY

In carrying out this research, the writer applies descriptive quantitative research method. Best and Khan (2006:24) stated that descriptive research (quantitative) uses quantitative methods to describe what is, describing, recording, analyzing, and interpreting conditions that exist and statistical analysis is used to describe the results of the study. A descriptive method is describing and interpreting a current event, condition and situation of the present. This research employs the descriptive method because the writer intends to find and describe the present condition of the sample based on the factual data.

The population of this research were 91 students of Regular B English Education Study Program who have been learning at FKIP Tanjungpura University Pontianak more than five years. The sample of this research selected by using purposive sampling. The writer selected the sample from the population who would provide the richest information about the causing factors of students' difficulties in writing thesis. For that purpose, the writer decided some characteristics as the consideration in selecting the samples. The characteristics were: (1) They are active students of Regular B English Education Study Program of Tanjungpura University Pontianak, (2) They have been learning in the Regular B English Education Study Program of FKIP Tanjungpura University Pontianak more than five years, (3) They are in the process of writing research report (thesis), (4) They had thesis examination but still in the process of revising their thesis writing, (5) They are accessible. Total number of the students who became the samples that matched with the characteristics mentioned above were 28 students.

The data in this research was collected by using closed-ended questionnaire. The writer used likert scale in providing response options for the participants. It

contains five statements and each statement has a scale value ranging from 1 to 5. The scale indicates of positive sense of strongly agree has a score 5, the scale indicates of positive sense of agree has a score 4, the scale indicates sense of neutral has a score 3, the scale indicates of disagree has a score 2, and the scale indicates of strongly disagree has a score 1. The likert type questionnaire consists of 31 question items. It was made based on indicators of the factors that considered as potential factors causing undergraduate students' difficulties in writing research report (thesis).

Table 1
Table of Scale Value

Responses	Scale Value
Strongly agree (SA)	5
Agree (A)	4
Neutral (N)	3
Disagree (D)	2
Strongly Disagree (SD)	1

Table 2
Table of Spesification

Factors	Indicators
Basic knowledge of thesis main components factor	Writing introduction chapter
	Writing literature review chapter
	Writing methodology chapter
	Writing result chapter
	Writing conclusion chapter
Process of consultation factor	Understanding and doing supervisor's suggestion and feedback
	Availability of time for discussion
Psychological factor	Self-esteem
	Anxiety
	Motivation
Economic factor	Managing the time as a college students and a worker
	Making the first priority between finishing study and working

The procedures in this research were: (1) Constructing the questionnaire, (2) Checking the content validity of the questionnaire by the supervisors (3) Revising the questionnaire based on the supervisors' corrections, (4) Distributing the questionnaire

to the sample, (5) Tabulating the data, (6) Analyzing the data, (7) Writing the research report.

RESEARCH FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Research Finding

The score of each student's answer of the questionnaire was analyzed in order to determine the most causing factor of students' difficulties in writing thesis in the English Education Study Program of FKIP Tanjungpura University Pontianak. The data was analyzed by counting the percentage of each factor by using the formula below.

$$\text{Percentage} = \frac{\text{Mean score of each factor}}{\text{Total mean score}} \times 100\%$$

Factor that has the highest percentage determines as the most causing factor of students' difficulties in writing thesis. The detail data can be seen from the table below.

Table 3
Table of The Mean Score and Percentage of Each Factor

Item Number	The total of respondents' answers					Total score of Each Item	Total Score of Each Factor	Mean	Percentage
	SD	D	N	A	SA				
1	1	6	15	4	2	84			
2	1	13	9	5	0	74			
3	5	14	6	2	1	64			
4	1	1	6	13	7	108			
5	0	4	11	12	1	94			
6	0	6	9	11	2	93			
7	2	12	8	4	2	76			
8	2	8	6	10	2	86	1432	89.5	27.67%
9	3	6	6	8	5	90			
10	1	7	10	6	4	89			
11	0	1	5	15	7	112			
12	3	7	7	8	3	85			
13	0	7	7	9	5	96			
14	0	4	6	14	4	102			
15	0	6	5	15	2	97			
16	2	8	9	8	1	82			
17	5	12	5	2	4	72	421	84.2	26.04%
18	1	13	7	6	1	77			

19	0	10	14	3	1	79			
20	1	7	7	6	7	95			
21	2	5	5	9	7	98			
22	1	4	8	12	3	96			
23	1	7	10	6	4	89			
24	0	5	10	9	4	96	490	81.67	25.25%
25	1	5	12	6	4	91			
26	6	16	3	2	1	60			
27	11	10	4	0	3	58			
28	5	1	3	12	7	99			
29	6	3	6	10	3	85	272	68	21.03%
30	14	12	1	1	0	45			
31	16	9	3	0	0	43			
Total						2615	2615	323.37	100%

*SD= Strongly Disagree *D= Disagree *N= Neutral *A= Agree

*SA= Strongly Agree

1. Basic Knowledge of Thesis Main Components Factor

The total score of basic knowledge of thesis main components factor is 1432 with the mean is 89.5 and the percentage is 27.68%. Basic knowledge of thesis main components factor consists of 16 items (item no. 1-16), the description below is the detail description of each item in the basic knowledge of thesis main components factor ranging from the highest score to the lowest score. Item that has the highest score of this factor is the item number 11 (I get difficulty in analyzing the data). There was no student who answered strongly disagree, 1 student answered disagree, 5 students answered neutral, 15 students answered agree, and 7 students answered strongly agree, the score of this item is 112. Item number 4 (I get difficulty in finding references for the literature) has the score 118. In this item, there was 1 student who answered strongly disagree, 1 student answered disagree, 6 students answered neutral, 13 students answered agree, and 7 students answered strongly agree.

In the item number 14 (I get difficulty in commenting the result of research), there was no student who answered strongly disagree, 4 students answered disagree, 6 students answered neutral, 14 students answered agree, and 4 students answered strongly agree. The score of item number 14 is 102. Item number 15 (I get difficulty in summarizing the result of research) has the score 97. In this item, there was no student who answered strongly disagree, 6 students answered disagree, 5 students answered neutral, 15 students answered agree, and 2 students answered strongly agree. Item number 13 (I get difficulty in explaining in detailed about the result) has the score 96. In this item, there was no student answered strongly disagree, 7 students answered disagree, 7 students answered neutral, 9 students answered agree, and 5 students answered strongly agree. Item

number 5 (I get difficulty in understanding the content of literature) has the score 94. In this item, there was no student who answered strongly disagree, 4 students answered disagree, 11 students answered neutral, 12 students answered agree, and 1 student answered strongly agree.

Item number 6 (I get difficulty in summarizing of the literature) has the score 93. In this item, there was no student who answered strongly disagree, 6 students answered disagree, 9 students answered neutral, 11 students answered agree, and 2 students answered strongly agree. Item number 9 (I get difficulty in determining sample size) has the score 90. In this item, there were 3 students who answered strongly disagree, 6 students answered disagree, 6 students answered neutral, 8 students answered agree, and 5 students answered strongly agree. Item number 10 (I get difficulty in collecting the data) has the score 89. In this item, there was 1 student who answered strongly disagree, 7 students answered disagree, 10 students answered neutral, 6 students answered agree, and 4 students answered strongly agree. Item number 8 (I get difficulty in determining technique of selecting sample) has the score 86. In this item, there were 2 students who answered strongly disagree, 8 students answered disagree, 6 students answered neutral, 10 students answered agree, and 2 students answered strongly agree.

Item number 12 (I get difficulty in displaying result in tables/charts/figures) has the score 85. In this item, there were 3 students who answered strongly disagree, 7 students answered disagree, 7 students answered neutral, 8 students answered agree, and 3 students answered strongly agree. Item number 1 (I get difficulty in providing background of research) has the score 84. In this item, there was 1 student who answered strongly disagree, 6 students answered disagree, 15 students answered neutral, 4 students answered agree, and 2 students answered strongly agree. Item number 16 (I get difficulty in giving suggestion of the research) has the score 82. In this item, there were 2 students answered strongly disagree, 8 students answered disagree, 9 students answered neutral, 8 students answered agree, and 1 student answered strongly agree.

Item number 7 (I get difficulty in deciding research design to use) has the score 76. In this factor, there were 2 students who answered strongly disagree, 12 students answered disagree, 8 students answered neutral, 4 students answered agree, and 2 students answered strongly agree. Item number 2 (I get difficulty in identifying research problem) has the score 74. In this factor, there was 1 student who answered strongly disagree, 13 students answered disagree, 9 students answered neutral, 5 students answered agree, and there was no student who answered strongly agree. Item number 3 (I get difficulty in identifying purpose of research) has the lowest score in the basic knowledge of thesis main components factor, the score of item number 3 is 64. In this item, there were 5 students who answered strongly disagree, 14 students answered disagree, 6 students answered neutral, 2 students answered agree, and 1 student answered strongly agree.

2. Process of Consultation Factor

The second causing factor of students' difficulties in writing thesis is the process of consultation factor. The total score of the process of consultation factors

is 421 with the mean is 84.2 and the percentage is 26.04%. Process of consultation factor consists of 5 items, the description below is the detail description of each item in the process of consultation factor ranging from the highest score to the lowest score. Item that has the highest score of this factor is item number 21 (I feel difficult to have enough time to discuss my thesis with my supervisors because they are busy), the score is 98. Item number 20 (I get difficulty to meet my supervisors to discuss my thesis) has the score 95. In this factor, there was 1 student answered strongly disagree, 7 students answered disagree, 7 students answered neutral, 6 students answered agree, and 7 students answered strongly agree.

Item number 19 (I get difficulty in doing my supervisors' suggestion/feedback) has the score 79. In this item, there was no student who answered strongly disagree, 10 students answered disagree, 14 students answered neutral, 3 students answered agree, and 1 student answered strongly agree. Item number 18 (I get difficulty understanding my supervisors' suggestion/feedback) has the score 77. In this item, there was 1 student who answered strongly disagree, 13 students answered disagree, 7 students answered neutral, 6 students answered agree, and 1 student answered strongly agree. Item number 17 (I get difficulty in discussing my thesis with my supervisors) has the lowest score in the process of consultation factor, the score of item number 17 is 72. There were 5 students answered strongly disagree, 12 students answered disagree, 5 students answered neutral, 2 students answered agree, and 4 students answered strongly agree.

3. Psychological Factor

Psychological factor is the third causing factor of students' difficulties in writing thesis. The total score of psychological factor is 490 with the mean is 81.67 and the percentage is 25.25%. Psychological factor consists of 6 items, the description below is the detail description of each item in the process of consultation factor ranging from the highest score to the lowest score. Item number 22 (I feel difficult to write my thesis because I am not confident can write a good thesis) and item number 24 (I feel difficult to write my thesis because I worry to make mistakes in writing) have the same score and also the highest score of this factor, the score is 96. Item number 25 (I feel difficult to write my thesis because I am afraid that I cannot write a good thesis) has the score 91. In this item, there was 1 student who answered strongly disagree, 5 students answered disagree, 12 students answered neutral, 6 students answered agree, and 4 students answered strongly agree.

Item number 23 (I feel difficult to write my thesis because I think that I am not be able to write as better as other students) has the score 89. In this item, there was 1 student who answered strongly disagree, 7 students answered disagree, 10 students answered neutral, 6 students answered agree, and 4 students answered strongly agree. Item number 26 (I feel difficult to write my thesis because I have no motivation in my self) has the score 60. In this item, there were 6 students who answered strongly disagree, 16 students answered disagree, 3 students answered neutral, 2 students answered agree, and 1 student answered strongly agree. Item

number 27 (I feel difficult to write my thesis because there is no one motivates me) has the lowest score in the psychological factor, the score of item number 27 is 58. In this item, there were 11 students who answered strongly disagree, 10 students answered disagree, 4 students answered neutral, 0 students answered agree, and 3 students answered strongly agree.

4. Economic Factor

Economic factor have the lowest mean score and percentage among the four factors. The total score of the economic factor is 272 with the mean is 68 and the percentage is 21.03%. Economic factor consists of 4 items, the description below is the detail description of each item in the process of consultation factor ranging from the highest score to the lowest score. Item that has the highest score of this factor is item number 28 (I get difficulty in writing thesis because I cannot manage the time between working and writing a thesis), the score is 99. Item number 29 (I get difficulty in writing thesis because I spend more time to work rather than to write a thesis) has the score 85. In this item, there were 6 students answered strongly disagree, 3 students answered disagree, 6 students answered neutral, 10 students answered agree, and 3 students answered strongly agree.

Item number 30 (I feel difficult to write my thesis because my first priority is working) has the score 45. In this item, there were 14 students answered strongly disagree, 12 students answered disagree, 1 student answered neutral, 1 students answered agree, and there was no student who answered strongly agree. Item number 31 (I feel difficult to write my thesis because making money is more important than writing a thesis) has the lowest score in the economic factor, the score of item number 31 is 43. In this factor, there were 16 students answered strongly disagree, 9 students answered disagree, 3 students answered neutral, 0 students answered agree, and 0 student who answered strongly agree.

Discussion

The research finding shows that the most causing factor of students' difficulty in writing thesis is basic knowledge of thesis main components factor, which has the highest mean score and percentage. This factor relates to students' capability in writing each main chapter of the thesis, and doing all procedures to accomplish their thesis. The main components of thesis and all the procedures were actually already learned by the students from the classes that related to the components of thesis, methodology, and statistic. The fact that they still got difficulties in all those things, it shows that the learning process from the classes that related to the thesis was not effective. Moreover, English Education Study Program of FKIP Tanjungpura University Pontianak did not provide a guidebook that deeply discuss about the components of the thesis to help the students in writing thesis. So that, most of the students were making their seniors' thesis writing as their guidance for their writing. In fact, not all of the seniors' writings were completely right.

From 16 items of the questionnaire that represents basic knowledge of thesis main components factor, it is found that most of the students have difficulty in

analyzing the data. Both analyzing quantitative data and qualitative data have their own level of difficulty. In analyzing quantitative data, the difficulty comes from statistical analysis, analyzing numerical data using mathematical procedures. This is supported by a research conducted by Olakulehin and Ojo (2008) on postgraduate distance learning students in Nigeria, they found that many students were very daunting because of the difficulty in analyzing the statistical component of the research. While qualitative data analysis brings other different level difficulty. According to Paltridge and Starfield (2007:126), "There is evidence to suggest that the second-language student may avoid doing and writing about qualitative research because of the perceived linguistic challenges involved." In addition, Miles and Huberman (as cited in Paltridge and Starfield, 2007:128) argued that the reporting of qualitative data may be one of the most fertile fields going: there are no fixed formats, and the ways data are being analysed and interpreted are getting more and more various.

Process of consultation factor is the second causing factor of students' difficulties in writing thesis. Process of consultation is the process of consultation, discussion, and revision from the very first of students' research with their supervisors. Two aspects that relate to process of consultation factor in this research are understanding and doing supervisors' suggestion or feedback, and availability of time for discussion. From 5 items of the questionnaire that represents the process of consultation factor, it shows that students get most difficulty to have enough time to discuss their thesis with their supervisors. A research conducted by Alafgani (2013) on 76 JPTA FPTK UPI students who took their last project (skripsi) also found that the most factor causing students' difficulties in writing thesis was process of consultation factor especially in term of managing the time of consultation.

The fact that supervisors handle not only one and more students, but also teach, conduct researches, and do other academic and social matters, so they may have little time spent to discuss the students' research project. However, the supervisors cannot be blamed in this case. If the students can maximize their supervisors' suggestion and feedback, and write their thesis properly, it means that their supervisors will spend time more efficient to check their writing. Therefore, the supervisors can have more time to discuss future recommendation for the students' thesis. As stated by Berndtsson et al (2008:17), "If the students hand in material that is carefully proofread, well structured and clearly written, it means that the supervisor can spend less time on commenting presentation details." As a result, Berndtsson et al (2008:17) added that more time can instead be spent on discussing their results, future directions for their work etc. In this way, the students will be using their portion of the supervisor's time more efficiently.

Psychological factor is in the third position in causing students' difficulty in writing thesis. Economic factor in this research have 3 aspects: self-esteem, anxiety, and motivation. Based on the students' responses of the 6 items from the questionnaire, which represents the psychological factor, it is found that the students' self-esteem and anxiety are the main causes of students' difficulties in writing thesis. In line with that, a research conducted by Dwihandini et al (2013) on undergraduate students in the English Department of Mahasaraswati University found that the most indicator in psychological factor affecting students' difficulties in writing thesis was

self-esteem of the students. In term of students' anxiety, there was no significant evident that students' anxiety could cause students' difficulty in writing thesis. Yet, Shang (2013) found that students in English at a private university in Taiwan generally appear to be anxious when writing in English no matter how many years the students have learned English writing in the past. Although the research conducted by Shang was not directly related to this research, the finding of his research can support the finding of this research.

Economic factor has the lowest mean score and percentage among those 4 factors. It means that economic factor is in the last place in causing students' difficulty in writing thesis. Based on 4 items of the questionnaire that represents the economic factor, it shows that the students get difficulty in writing thesis because they cannot manage their time well between working and writing a thesis. Working while studying is good, it helps parents to pay college expenses, but for those who cannot manage their time well, of course it will give impact to their college especially if they in process of writing thesis, which defines as difficult project and it takes extra time to be done. In addition, Ningsih (as cited in Muliani, 2003) stated that an obstacle of being worker and college student is difficulty in managing their time between college, work, rest and other matters.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

Based on the research finding in can be concluded that the most causing factor of students' difficulties in writing thesis is basic knowledge of thesis main components factor. Among 16 items of the questionnaire that relates to the basic knowledge of thesis main components factor, analyzing the data is the main cause of students' difficulty in writing thesis.

Suggestion

From the findings of the research, the writer suggests some opinion to be considered as follows. (1) The students of English Education Study Program of FKIP Tanjungpura University Pontianak should learn seriously about the components of the thesis, research methodology, and statistic. Students can learn from the classes that related to the thesis writing project such as RELT, Research Paper, Seminar on ELT, and also Statistic class, (2) English Education Study Program of FKIP Tanjungpura University Pontianak should provide a guidebook that deeply discusses about thesis, its components and example of thesis writing, (3) The students should consider that working while studying in college brings some consequences especially difficulty in managing the time. If the students really want to work, they have to select part time job that does not corrupt the students' time to study, (4) The students should maximize their thesis writing based on their supervisors' suggestion and feedback. If they hand in their writing that is carefully proofread, well structured, and properly written. It will make the supervisors spend less time on checking the students' thesis, so that the

supervisors can spend more time on discussing the future recommendation for the students' thesis writing.

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