



THESIS WRITING PROBLEMS FACED BY THE 11th SEMESTER STUDENTS OF ENGLISH DEPARTMENT AT UNIVERSITY OF MATARAM

Sukma Tri Astika^{1*}, Lalu Thohir², Udin³

^{1 2 3} English Education Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education,
University of Mataram, Indonesia

*sukmasugiastika3@gmail.com

Abstract: This research aims to analyze the problems faced by the 11th semester students of English Department at University of Mataram in writing thesis. The qualitative method and purposive sampling were used in this research. The findings showed that: 1) the problems faced by the students were in medium range for both personality and sociocultural factors which 60% in personality factors and 48% in sociocultural factors, 2) lack of facilities and communication with supervisors, 3) anxiety, 4) the difficulty in determining the grammar correctly, and 5) a student felt discrimination from the supervisor. Next, the dominant problem faced by male students was the supervisors did not provide time for guidance. Meanwhile, the dominant problems faced by female students were: 1) difficulty in determining the topic of their thesis, 2) difficulty in choosing ideas for writing a thesis, 3) difficulty in identifying several problems related to thesis writing, and 4) pressure from their parents to graduate quickly. Further, the students' efforts to solve the problems were: 1) working alone, 2) listening to music and watching drama, 3) discussing the problems with the supervisors and friends, 4) refreshing to find some inspiration, 5) reading a lot of journals, and 6) trying to contact the supervisors.

Keywords: Academic writing, thesis writing, problems in writing thesis

INTRODUCTION

Academic writing is the formal, comprehensible writing of an evidence-based point of view on a particular subject, question, or topic (Gabi, 2022). It is characterized by its formal tone, use of evidence-based arguments, and adherence to academic conventions and standards. Examples of academic writing include research papers, essays, theses, and dissertations. The type of academic writing that will be the focus of this research is thesis writing. Thesis writing is a process of researching and presenting a scholarly argument in written form. It is a significant undertaking that requires extensive research, critical thinking, and academic writing skills. Murray (2011) stated that a thesis is a far bigger project which requires more independent study, and more self-motivation than students will ever have undertaken before. Therefore, family support and the writer is ready to face challenges and obstacles in writing a final report to build self-confidence are needed (Emilia, 2012).

However, for English Department students at the University of Mataram, thesis or the final project must be written in English. As a foreign language learners, there must be some difficulties faced by the students while writing their thesis. Because, for those whose first language is not English, writing a thesis in English must be a greater challenge (Paltridge &

Starfield, 2007). Darmono and Hasan (2002) stated that in completing a thesis, students ideally need six months. Nevertheless, in reality, there are many students who need more time to complete it. It is evident from the information that the researcher received from the staff of the English Department as of September 2022, only 38 of 176 eighth-semester students have graduated. It consists of 35 females and 3 males, which is a very significant difference in numbers. According to Baron & Byrne cited in Hoang (2008) gender indirectly influences the formation of attitudes and motivation to learn. Female students have an average score of learning motivation that is higher than male students (Saragi, 2018).

Based on the description above, the researcher is interested in conducting this research in order to know the problems faced by the students. This research covers the dominant problems faced by the male and female students in writing their thesis and how the students solve the problems.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research used a qualitative descriptive method. The questionnaire was used to know the problems faced by the 11th-semester students of the English department at the University of Mataram and the dominant problems faced by male and female students. The questionnaire was adopted from Dwihandini (2013). While, the interview was used to know the efforts of students to solve the problems. The data carried out through; creating the questionnaire and the interview questions, testing the instrument on five representatives of the sample to ensure that the sample could understand the language used by the researcher, consulting the instruments with the supervisors, sharing the questionnaire with the sample through a google form, conducting the interview via WhatsApp after all the sample filled out the questionnaire, analyzing the data collected, and the last drawing the conclusions. After collecting the data, the researcher analyzed the data by using the percentage technique.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A. FINDINGS

1. Students' Problems In Writing Thesis

After collecting the data, the researcher found that the students have problems in writing thesis. The problems are classified based on two factors, they are personality factors and sociocultural factors.

a. Personality Factors

In the table 1 below, in question number 1, there are 3 students answered strongly agree (SA), 11 students answered agree (A), 5 students answered disagree (D), and 1 student answered strongly disagree (SD). For negative answers $3+11=14$, so the percentages: $\frac{14 \times 100}{20} = 70$. For positive answers $5+1=6$, so the percentages: $\frac{6 \times 100}{20} = 30$. It is concluded that 70% of students found it difficult to determine the topic of their thesis, and 30% did not. After that, there are 3 students answered strongly agree, 10 students answered agree, 6 students answered disagree, and 1 student answered strongly disagree in question number

2. The researcher concluded that 65% of the students found it difficult to choose the title of their thesis, while 35% did not.

Table 1. Students' Problems in Personality Factors

No	Items	SA	A	Total/%	SD	D	Total/%
1	It is difficult for me to determine the topic of my thesis	3	11	70	1	5	30
2	It is difficult for me to choose the title of the thesis	3	10	65	6	1	25
3	It is difficult for me to identify and formulate the tasks of the thesis	1	13	70	2	4	30
4	It is difficult for me to determine the purpose of the thesis	0	6	30	2	12	70
5	It is difficult for me to find the appropriate literature review	2	10	60	2	6	40
6	It is difficult for me to determine the method that I will use in my thesis	2	9	55	1	8	45
7	It is difficult for me to choose ideas for write a thesis	3	12	75	1	4	25
8	I become anxious about writing a thesis	4	8	60	2	6	40
9	It is difficult for me to find out the latest issues regarding my thesis writing	1	11	60	1	7	40
10	It is difficult for me to identify several problems related to thesis writing	1	11	60	1	7	40
11	It is difficult for me to manage time to work on my thesis	4	8	60	3	5	40
12	I do not have a strong motivation during the process of writing the thesis	4	4	40	3	9	60
13	My parents always insisted on my graduation	7	9	80	2	2	20
Total		35	94	785	27	76	515
		Mean		60%	Mean		40%
		Range		Medium	Range		Low

For question number 3, there are 1 student selected strongly agree, 13 students selected agree, 4 students selected disagree, and 2 students selected strongly disagree. In question number 3, 70% of the students found it difficult to identify and formulate the tasks of the thesis, and 30% did not. And then, there are no students selected strongly agree, 6 students selected agree, 12 students selected disagree, and 2 students selected strongly disagree in question number 4. The researcher concluded that 30% of the students found that they were difficult to determine the purpose of the thesis, while 70% found it not difficult. In question number 5, there are 2 students selected strongly agree, 10 students selected agree, 6 students selected disagree, and 2 students selected strongly disagree. It is concluded that 60% of the students have difficulties in finding the appropriate literature review, and 40% did not.

Next, there are 2 students selected strongly agree, 9 students selected agree, 8 students selected disagree, and 1 student selected strongly disagree in question number 6. It is known that 55% of the students agreed that they were difficult to determine the method that they would use in their thesis, while 45% disagreed. For question number 7, 3 students selected strongly agree, 12 students selected agree, 4 students selected disagree, and 1 student

selected strongly disagree. The researcher concluded that 75% of the students agreed that they were difficult to choose ideas for writing thesis, and 25% students disagreed. There are 4 students selected strongly agree, 8 students selected agree, 6 students selected disagree, and 2 students selected strongly disagree in question number 8. The researcher concluded that 60% of the students became anxious about writing a thesis, while 40% did not. For question number 9, there are 1 student selected strongly agree, 11 students selected agree, 7 students selected disagree, and 1 student selected strongly disagree. The researcher concluded that 60% of the students have difficulty in finding out the latest issues regarding their thesis writing, and 40% did not. And then, there are 1 student selected strongly agree, 11 students selected agree, 7 students selected disagree, and 1 student selected strongly disagree in question number 10. In conclusion, 60% of the students have difficulty in identifying several problems related to their thesis writing, while 40% did not.

Moreover, there are 4 students selected strongly agree, 8 students selected agree, 5 students selected disagree, and 3 students selected strongly disagree in question number 11. In summary, 60% of the students have difficulty in managing time to work on their thesis, and 40% did not. For question number 12, there are 4 students selected strongly agree, 4 students selected agree, 9 students selected disagree, and 3 students selected strongly disagree. The researcher concluded that 60% of the students had a strong motivation during the process of writing the thesis, while 40% did not. In the last question about personality factors, there are 7 students selected strongly agree, 9 students selected agree, 2 students selected disagree, and 2 students selected strongly disagree. In conclusion, 80% of the students were pressured by their parents to graduate quickly, and 20% did not. From the data above, the problems faced by the students in personality factors were 60% negative and 40% positive.

b. Sociocultural Factors

Table 2. Students' Problems In Sociocultural Factors

No	Items	SA	A	Total/%	SD	D	Total/%
1	My friends do not care about the difficulties that I face when writing my thesis	2	7	45	2	9	55
2	I wasted more time to hang out with my friends than working on my thesis	0	9	45	4	7	55
3	The supervisors do not provide time for me to guidance	3	7	50	0	10	50
4	The supervisors are difficult to meet to consult about my thesis	5	5	50	3	7	50
5	The supervisors often don't give a response when I contact them to consult about my thesis	2	8	50	2	8	50
Total		12	36	240	11	41	260
				Mean			Mean
				48%			52%
				Range			Range
				Medium			Medium

Based on table 2 above, in question number 1, there are 2 students selected strongly agree, 7 students selected agree, 9 students selected disagree, and 2 students selected strongly disagree. The researcher concluded that 45% of the students felt that their friends

did not care about the problems they faced when writing their thesis, but 55% students felt otherwise. There were no students selected strongly agree, 9 students selected agree, 7 students selected disagree, and 4 students selected strongly disagree in question number 2. It is concluded that 45% of the students wasted more time hanging out with friends than working on their thesis, and 55% did not.

And then in question number 3, there are 3 students selected strongly agree, 7 students selected agree, 10 students selected disagree, and there were no students selected strongly disagree. In conclusion, 50% of the students agreed that the supervisors do not provide time for guidance, and 50% disagreed. Next, there are 5 students selected strongly agree, 5 students selected agree, 7 students selected disagree, and 3 students selected strongly disagree in question number 4. In conclusion, 50% of the students agreed that the supervisors were difficult to meet to consult about the thesis, and 50% disagreed. And the last question about sociocultural factors, there are 2 students selected strongly agree, 8 students selected agree, 8 students selected disagree, and 2 students selected strongly disagree. To sum up, there were 50% of the students agreed that the supervisors often did not give a response when the students contacted them to consult about the thesis, while 50% disagreed. In summary, the sociocultural factors faced by the students were about 52% positive and 48% negative.

Based on the interview, the researcher found other problems that students faced aside from the items in the questionnaire. The problems were a lack of facilities, difficulties in determining the grammar correctly, and anxiety. In addition, the students also faced other problems in sociocultural factors, namely the lack of communication with supervisors and the student feeling there was discrimination from the supervisor.

2. Dominant Problems Faced by Male And Female Students

There is a significant difference between the learning motivation of female and male students. This happens because of gender inequality between males and females in the learning process. Therefore, students who receive more attention will be more easily motivated (Utami, 2020). The researcher also found the differences of dominant problems faced by male and female students.

1) Dominant Problems Faced by Male Students

The researcher described the dominant problems faced by male students based on two categories namely personality factors, and sociocultural factors.

a. Personality Factors Faced by Male Students

The percentage is obtained from the following formula: for negative answers $0+6=6$, so the percentages: $\frac{6 \times 100}{10} = 60$. For positive answers $1+3=4$, so the percentages: $\frac{4 \times 100}{10} = 40$. In table 3 below, the results about personality factors for question number 1 showed that 60% of male students had difficulty in determining the topic of their thesis, while 40% did not. Then, question number 2 showed that 60% of male students had difficulty in choosing the title of the thesis, but 40% did not. there are 70% of male students had difficulty in identifying and formulating the tasks of their thesis and 30% did not in question number 3. There are 30% of male students had difficulty to determine the purpose of their thesis, while 70% did not in question number 4. In question number 5, it is showed that 50% of male students had difficulty in finding the appropriate literature review, and 50% did not.

Moreover, there are 60% of male students had difficulty in determining the method they will use in their thesis, while 40% did not in question number 6.

Table 3. Personality Factors Faced by Male Students

No	Items	SA	A	Total/%	SD	D	Total/%	
1	It is difficult for me to determine the topic of my thesis	0	6	60	1	3	40	
2	It is difficult for me to choose the title of the thesis	1	5	60	1	3	40	
3	It is difficult for me to identify and formulate the tasks of the thesis	0	7	70	2	1	30	
4	It is difficult for me to determine the purpose of the thesis	0	3	30	2	5	70	
5	It is difficult for me to find the appropriate literature review	1	4	50	1	4	50	
6	It is difficult for me to determine the method that I will use in my thesis	1	5	60	1	3	40	
7	It is difficult for me to choose ideas for write a thesis	2	5	70	1	2	30	
8	I become anxious about writing a thesis	0	4	40	1	5	60	
9	It is difficult for me to find out the latest issues regarding my thesis writing	0	7	70	1	2	30	
10	It is difficult for me to identify several problems related to thesis writing	0	4	40	1	5	60	
11	It is difficult for me to manage time to work on my thesis	2	4	60	2	2	40	
12	I do not have a strong motivation during the process of writing the thesis	2	4	60	1	3	40	
13	My parents always insisted on my graduation	6	2	80	1	1	20	
Total		15	60	750	16	39	550	
				Mean	58%	Mean		42%
				Range	Medium	Range		Medium

Further, question number 7 showed that 70% of male students had difficulty in choosing ideas for writing the thesis, and 30% did not. Next, question number 8 showed that 40% of male students became anxious about writing the thesis, while 60% did not. It is showed that 70% of male students had difficulty in finding out the latest issues regarding their thesis writing, and 30% did not. In question number 10, there were 40% of male students had difficulty in identifying several problems related to thesis writing, while 60% did not. Then, it is showed that 60% of male students had difficulty in managing time to work on their thesis, and 40% did not in question number 11. Further, question number 12 showed that 60% of male students did not have a strong motivation during the process of writing the thesis, while 40% did. The last question showed that 80% of male students were always pressured by their parents to graduate quickly, and 20% did not.

b. Sociocultural Factors Faced by Male Students

The results for sociocultural factors in question number 1 showed that 60% of male students felt that their friends did not care about the problems they faced when writing their thesis, and 40% did not. Then, it is showed that 40% of male students wasted more time hanging out with their friends than working on their thesis, while 60% did not in question number 2. Question number 3 showed

that 90% of male students agreed that the supervisors do not provide time for guidance, and 10% disagreed. Next, in question number 4, it is showed that 70% of male students agreed that the supervisors were difficult to meet to consult about their thesis, while 30% disagreed. The last question showed that 70% of male students agreed that the supervisors often did not give responses when the students contacted the supervisors to consult about their thesis, and 30% disagreed.

Table 4. Sociocultural Factors Faced by Male Students

No	Items	SA	A	Total/%	SD	D	Total/%
1	My friends do not care about the difficulties that I face when writing my thesis	1	5	60	0	4	40
2	I wasted more time to hang out with my friends than working on my thesis	0	4	40	3	3	60
3	The supervisors do not provide time for me to guidance	2	7	90	0	1	10
4	The supervisors are difficult to meet to consult about my thesis	5	2	70	1	2	30
5	The supervisors often don't give a response when I contact them to consult about my thesis	2	5	70	1	2	30
Total		10	23	330	5	12	170
		Mean		66%	Mean		34%
		Range		High	Range		Low

The data shows that the problems faced by the male students in personality factors were 58% negative and 42% positive, while the sociocultural factors were 66% negative and 34% positive. It means that 58% of male students faced the problems in personality factors, and 66% faced problems in sociocultural factors. Meanwhile, the dominant problems faced by male students were in sociocultural factors, item number 3. It is shown that 90% of male students agreed that supervisors do not provide time for guidance.

2) Dominant Problems Faced by Female Students

The researcher described the dominant problems faced by female students according to two factors namely personality factors, and sociocultural factors.

a. Personality Factors Faced by Female Students

Based on the table 5 below, the results about personality factors for question number 1 showed that 80% of female students had difficulty in determining the topic of their thesis, and 20% did not. Then, question number 2 showed that 70% of female students had difficulty in choosing the title of the thesis, while 30% did not. In question number 3, it is showed that 70% of female students had difficulty in identifying and formulating the tasks of their thesis, and 30% did not. Next, it is showed that 30% of female students had difficulty to determine the purpose of their thesis, while 70% did not in question number 4. In question number 5, it is showed that 70% of female students had difficulty in finding the appropriate literature review and 30% did not.

Next, there are 50% of female students had difficulty in determining the method they will use in their thesis, and 50% did not in question number 6. And then, in question number 7, it is showed that 80% of female students had difficulty in choosing ideas for writing the thesis, while 20% did not. In question number 8 showed that 60% of female students became anxious about writing the thesis, and 40% did not. In question number 9, it is showed that

50% of female students had difficulty in finding out the latest issues regarding their thesis writing, and 50% did not. There were 80% of female students had difficulty in identifying several problems related to thesis writing, while 20% did not in question number 10.

Table 5. Personality Factors Faced by Female Students

No	Items	SA	A	Total/%	SD	D	Total/%
1	It is difficult for me to determine the topic of my thesis	3	5	80	0	2	20
2	It is difficult for me to choose the title of the thesis	2	5	70	0	3	30
3	It is difficult for me to identify and formulate the tasks of the thesis	1	6	70	0	3	70
4	It is difficult for me to determine the purpose of the thesis	0	3	30	0	7	70
5	It is difficult for me to find the appropriate literature review	1	6	70	1	2	30
6	It is difficult for me to determine the method that I will use in my thesis	1	4	50	0	5	50
7	It is difficult for me to choose ideas for write a thesis	1	7	80	0	2	20
8	I become anxious about writing a thesis	2	4	60	1	3	40
9	It is difficult for me to find out the latest issues regarding my thesis writing	1	4	50	0	5	50
10	It is difficult for me to identify several problems related to thesis writing	1	7	80	0	2	20
11	It is difficult for me to manage time to work on my thesis	2	4	60	1	3	40
12	I do not have a strong motivation during the process of writing the thesis	2	0	20	2	6	80
13	My parents always insisted on my graduation	1	7	80	1	1	20
Total		18	62	800	6	44	500
		Mean		62%	Mean		38%
		Range		High	Range		Low

Further, question number 11 showed that 60% of female students had difficulty in managing time to work on their thesis, and 40% did not. In question number 12, there are 20% of female students did not have a strong motivation during the process of writing the thesis, but 80% have a strong motivation. The last question showed that 80% of female students were always pressured by their parents to graduate quickly, and 20% did not.

b. Sociocultural Factors Faced by Female Students

The results for sociocultural factors in question number 1 showed that 30% of female students felt that their friends did not care about the problems they faced when writing their thesis, and 70% did not felt the same. In question number 2, there were 50% of female students wasted more time hanging out with their friends than working on their thesis, and 50% did not.

Next, question number 3 showed that 10% of female students agreed that the supervisors do not provide time for guidance, and 90% disagreed. Further, it is showed that 30% of female students agreed that the supervisors were difficult to meet to consult about

their thesis, while 70% disagreed in question number 4. The last question showed that 30% of female students agreed that the supervisors often did not give responses when the students contacted the supervisors to consult about their thesis, and 70% disagreed.

Table 6. Sociocultural Factors Faced by Female Students

No	Items	SA	A	Total/%	SD	D	Total/%
1	My friends do not care about the difficulties that I face when writing my thesis	1	2	30	2	5	70
2	I wasted more time to hang out with my friends than working on my thesis	0	5	50	1	4	50
3	The supervisors do not provide time for me to guidance	1	0	10	0	9	90
4	The supervisors are difficult to meet to consult about my thesis	0	3	30	2	5	70
5	The supervisors often don't give a response when I contact them to consult about my thesis	0	3	30	1	6	70
Total		2	13	150	6	29	350
		Mean		30%	Mean		70%
		Range		Low	Range		High

From the data, it is concluded that the personality factors faced by the female students were 62% negative and 38% positive, while the sociocultural factors were 30% negative and 70% positive. Which means that 62% of female students faced the problems in personality factors, and 30% faced the problems in sociocultural factors.

Based on the data from table 5 and 6, the dominant problems faced by female students were in personality factors number 1, 7, 10, and 14. It is shown that 80% of female students had difficulty in determining the topic of their thesis, difficulty in choosing ideas for writing a thesis, difficulty in identifying several problems related to thesis writing, and female students were pressured by their parents to graduate quickly.

3. Students' Efforts To Solve The Problems

To deal with the problems, there are several efforts that the students did to solve the problems based on the interview conducted. First, the second respondent solved the problem by going on vacation to find some inspiration, taking a break for a moment, and also listening to music while working on his thesis. Then, the fourth respondent said that she solved the problems by reading a lot of journals to determine the formulation of the problems and asking for help from the supervisors to find the relevant references. Meanwhile, the fifth respondent discussed the problems with her friends and read the previous thesis. Then, she discussed it with the supervisors about the grammar problems. She also decided to stop working and focus on her thesis to minimize the laziness she felt. However, for the facilities, she could only borrow it but could not borrow it every day. Besides, the sixth respondent has not found a solution about supervisor 2. She only keeps trying to contact Supervisor 2, as suggested by Supervisor 1. Also, she listened to music and watched dramas for 30 minutes if she did not have the inspiration to work on her thesis.

B. DISCUSSION

Based on the questionnaire, the researcher found all the points about the factors in writing a thesis. It showed that 60% personality factors and 48% sociocultural factors. Meanwhile, the interview results showed that the other problems faced by the students consist of anxiety, difficulties in determining the grammar correctly, and lack of facilities. Besides, sociocultural factors included a lack of communication with the supervisor because the supervisor was difficult to meet, and the student felt discrimination. This results supported by Wadison (2021) that students' difficulties in writing a thesis are difficulties in managing time, difficulties in determining research methodology, difficulties in determining research topics, and difficulties in communicating with supervisors.

Moreover, both male and female students face different dominant problems in writing a thesis. The dominant problems faced by male students were in sociocultural factors, item number 3. It is shown that 90% of male students agreed that supervisors do not provide time for guidance. In line with this, based on the interview, two respondents students stated that their supervisor was difficult to meet. Meanwhile, the dominant problems faced by female students were in personality factors number 1, 7, 10, and 14. Female students had difficulty in determining the topic of their thesis, difficulty choosing ideas for writing a thesis, difficulty in identifying several problems related to thesis writing, and female students were pressured by their parents to graduate quickly.

In addition, to complete a thesis, students must overcome the problems that they faced in writing the thesis. According to Blaire, in a study conducted by Muhayyang (2023), to overcome the problems in writing a thesis, students can work alone, create or join a community of practice, and work together with the supervisor. In line with this, the students' efforts to solve the problems are working alone, discussing the problems with supervisors and friends, going on vacation to find some inspiration, reading a lot of journals, and trying to contact the supervisors. When the students cannot focus on their work, they sometimes take a break to watch a drama and listen to music.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussions, it can be concluded that there are several problems faced by the students in writing thesis. The problems faced by the students in writing a thesis were in medium range for both personality and sociocultural factors which 60% in personality factors and 48% in sociocultural factors. Based on the interview, it was found that other problems faced by students are a lack of facilities, a lack of communication with supervisors, anxiety, difficulty in determining the grammar correctly, and a student felt discrimination from the supervisor.

The dominant problem faced by male students was the supervisors did not provide time for guidance. Meanwhile, the dominant problem faced by female students are difficulty in determining the topic of their thesis, difficulty in choosing ideas for writing a thesis, difficulty in identifying several problems related to thesis writing, and pressured by their parents to graduate quickly.

To overcome the problems, the students have some efforts to solve the problems. The students' efforts to solve the problems are working alone, listening to music and watching

drama, discussing the problems with the supervisors and friends, going on vacation to find some inspiration, and reading a lot of journals, tried to contact the supervisors even though the supervisors did not give a respond.

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