



Obstacle Factors and Difficulty Factors for Students in Higher Education in Completing Final Assignments

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ABSTRAK

Prokrastinasi sering terjadi pada mahasiswa di pendidikan tinggi. Fakta di perguruan tinggi tahun 2021-2022 dari 27 mahasiswa ditemukan dan 22,22% mahasiswa belum mengikuti seminar proposal dan belum menyelesaikan tugas akhir atau skripsi, 40.74% mahasiswa sudah mengikuti seminar proposal namun belum menyelesaikan tugas akhir atau skripsi, dan 37.03% mahasiswa telah mengikuti seminar proposal dan telah menyelesaikan tugas akhir atau skripsi. Masalah ini urgen untuk diteliti karena terdapat kesenjangan antara teori, harapan, dan kenyataan di lapangan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis faktor yang menyebabkan terjadinya prokrastinasi pada mahasiswa dalam menyelesaikan skripsi di perguruan tinggi. Metode penelitian adalah mixed methods. Subjek adalah mahasiswa yang berjumlah 50 orang. Teknik pengumpulan data menggunakan angket, wawancara, dan pengamatan langsung terhadap siswa. Teknik analisis dengan mengumpulkan data, mereduksi dan menarik kesimpulan. Data digambarkan dalam diagram dan hasil wawancara dan pengamatan diinterpretasikan. Hasilnya dan temuan penelitian, bahwa mahasiswa dalam mengerjakan skripsi banyak kesulitan yang disebabkan oleh faktor internal yaitu pengendalian diri, efikasi diri, dan motivasi kurang. Dalam proses penyelesaian tugas akhir atau skripsi, mahasiswa dituntut untuk belajar memotivasi diri, mengendalikan diri, dan mengembangkan efikasi diri yang tinggi agar mahasiswa dapat lebih fokus dalam menyelesaikan skripsinya.

ABSTRACT

Procrastination often occurs in students in higher education. Facts in higher education in 2021-2022 from 27 students were found, and 22.22% of students had not taken part in a proposal seminar and had not completed a final assignment or thesis, 40.74% of students had attended a proposal seminar but had not completed a final assignment or thesis, and 37.03% of students had have attended a proposal seminar and have completed a final assignment or thesis. This problem is urgent to research because there is a gap between theory, expectations and reality on the ground. This research aims to analyze the factors that cause procrastination in students when completing their theses in higher education. The research method is mixed methods. The subjects were 50 students. Data collection techniques use questionnaires, interviews and direct observation of students. Analysis technique by collecting data, reducing and drawing conclusions. Data is depicted in diagrams, and the results of interviews and observations are interpreted. The results and research findings show that students working on their thesis have many difficulties caused by internal factors, namely self-control, self-efficacy, and lack of motivation. In the process of completing a final assignment or thesis, students are required to learn to motivate themselves, control themselves, and develop high self-efficacy so that students can focus more on completing their thesis.

1. INTRODUCTION

Higher education is a formal education organizing unit where everyone dreams of gaining knowledge and a degree at their dream university (Haas & Hadjar, 2020; Krstikj et al., 2022). This is to the understanding that higher education is a higher level of education that a person can obtain after completing school at the upper secondary education level. Higher education includes diploma, bachelor's, specialist master's, and doctoral education programs organized by universities (Ghani et al., 2022; Santos et al., 2020; Tight, 2020). Higher education in the world can take the form of polytechnics, high schools, academics, universities and institutes of every type (Abad-Segura et al., 2020; Alam & Asimiran, 2021). Each university usually has several majors or study programs offered. Every prospective student who wants to enter a university will be faced with a choice of study program or major that they are interested in. Choosing a study program for them is a moment that determines the future in every phase of life. Study programs at the Faculty of Higher Education require study program students to complete the entire semester credit system including completing a final assignment or thesis (Boarin et al., 2020; Dyck et al., 2020). A final assignment

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or thesis in higher education is a scientific work written by an undergraduate student that discusses a particular topic or field based on the results of a literature review written by experts, the results of field research, or the results of the development of previous research states that the definition of a final project or thesis is scientific work in a field of study created by undergraduate students at the end of their studies as a requirement for completing the study program (Miranda et al., 2021; Nind & Katramadou, 2023). The study must be based on scientific research, field research, library research, and development research. So, it can be concluded that the definition of a thesis is a scientific work that must be written by a student as a condition for completing an undergraduate program to obtain the desired undergraduate degree (Cheung et al., 2020; Rahiem, 2021).

Preparing a final assignment or thesis in a study program in higher education is one part of the entire teaching and learning process and is a graduation requirement for students (Dafouz, 2020; Miranda et al., 2021; Nind & Katramadou, 2023). However, in completing the final assignment or thesis, students often encounter obstacles or difficulties in completing it and are often late in completing it (Gabriely et al., 2020). Ten factors cause procrastination so that students are slow in completing their final assignments, namely anxiety, low self-esteem, low tolerance for discomfort, seeking pleasure, time disorganization, environmental disorganization, weak approach to tasks, lack of assertiveness, hostility towards other people, and stress and fatigue (David et al., 2017; Gabriely et al., 2020). The term procrastination comes from the Latin procrastination with the prefix "pro" which means pushing or moving forward and the suffix "castings" which means tomorrow's decision (Xiao & Spanjol, 2021). The term procrastination in psychology is defined as the tendency to delay starting or completing overall performance to carry out other useless activities, resulting in hampered performance, never completing tasks on time, and often being late for meetings (Svardal et al., 2020). Academic procrastination as a tendency to always or almost always postpone work on academic assignments and always or almost always experience disturbing anxiety related to procrastination (Pekpazar et al., 2021; Svardal et al., 2020). Academic procrastination is deliberately delaying desired activities even though the individual knows that the delaying behavior could have negative impacts (Jiang et al., 2020).

Academic procrastination is an act of deliberately and repeatedly delaying starting or completing an academic task, and replacing it with another activity that is more enjoyable to oneself and is not so important that it hinders the academic performance of the individual or others (Bean et al., 2020). The behavior of voluntarily postponing work that has been scheduled and is important to do, resulting in emotional, physical, and academic consequences (Tandon et al., 2021). Procrastination is the behavior of procrastinating on work where someone feels disturbed by the delay because of fear (Chen et al., 2020; Tandon et al., 2021). Procrastination can be divided into two types, namely functional procrastination, namely delaying carrying out tasks aimed at obtaining more complete and accurate information, and dysfunctional, which is a delay that has no purpose, which has bad consequences and cause problems (Tan & Samavedham, 2022; Tandon et al., 2021). Procrastination has two characteristics (Brando-Garrido et al., 2020). First, procrastination can mean delaying an important and difficult task in favor of an easier one. It's quicker to complete and causes less anxiety. Second, procrastination can also mean waiting for the right time to act so that the results are maximum and the risks are minimal compared to if it were done or completed as usual, at a predetermined time. From several expert opinions above, it can be concluded that academic procrastination is a behavior of procrastinating or starting to do an academic task that has been given and takes a long time to complete, which if done repeatedly can become a habit.

In this case, the researcher also collected data about the academic procrastination of the final assignment/thesis in the study program at one of the tertiary institutions in Jakarta. In 2021, it was recorded that of the 64 students in the study program, 22.22% of students had not yet taken part in the proposal seminar and 40.74% had completed it. proposal seminar but have not completed the results seminar or have not completed the thesis, and 37.03% of students have attended the proposal seminar and completed the final assignment or thesis. In this case, 62.96% of students experience problems in 2021. In 2022, of the 62.96% who have problems with their thesis, there will still be 32% who have not been able to complete their final assignment. Data on the number of students who are unable to complete their final assignments continues to increase until 2023. Based on data in 2023 for the same study program, researchers obtained data from the head of the study program, there are around 35% of students who have difficulty completing their final assignments. This data does not stand alone, based on discussions with deans of faculties covering six study programs, faculty leaders said that almost 40% of their students in 2020 were unable to complete their final assignments.

Characteristics of Procrastination that as a procrastination behavior, academic procrastination can be manifested in certain indicators that can be measured and observed (Pu et al., 2022). Certain characteristics include: 1) Delay in starting and completing assignments, Delay in starting and completing the tasks at hand. Someone who carries out procrastination knows that the task at hand must be completed

immediately. However, he delays starting work on it or delays completing it to completion if he has started work before. 2) Delay in carrying out tasks. People who carry out procrastination need more time than is generally required to complete a task. A procrastinator spends the time he has to prepare himself excessively. Apart from that, he also does things that are not needed to complete a task, without taking into account the limited time he has. Sometimes these actions result in a person not being able to complete their tasks adequately. Inertia in the sense of someone's slowness in carrying out a task can be the main characteristic of academic procrastination. 3) Time gap between plans and actual performance. A procrastinator has difficulty doing something within a predetermined time limit. A procrastinator often experiences delays in meeting deadlines that have been determined, either by other people or plans that he has set himself. A person may have planned to start working on a task at a time he has determined for himself. However, when the time comes, he does not do it according to what has been planned, causing delays or failure to complete the task adequately. 4) Doing activities that are more fun, doing other activities that are more fun than doing the tasks that have to be done. A procrastinator deliberately does not immediately carry out his duties. However, using the time he has to do other activities that are considered more fun and provide entertainment, such as reading (newspapers, magazines, or other story books), watching movies, chatting, walking, listening to music, and so on, takes up the time he has. to carry out the tasks that must be completed (Bruyneel & Duclos, 2020; Pu et al., 2022).

This research is very urgent to be carried out by looking at the real problems in the field. This research needs to analyze and find out the obstacles and difficulties of students in completing their final assignments because there is a gap between expectations, theory, and reality in the field with the general aim of analyzing the factors that cause procrastination which causes mathematics education students to be late in completing their final assignments. Meanwhile, the specific aim of this research is to find out the procrastination factors for students being late in completing their thesis and to find out where students have difficulties in completing their thesis in higher education.

2. METHODS

The type of research method used is mixed methods (Harrison et al., 2020). Descriptive research is research that describes symptoms, events and occurrences that occur (Gourishankar et al., 2020). In descriptive research the researcher does not give special treatment to the event. Qualitative research as a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written words spoken by people and observable behavior (Sovacool et al., 2020). Research Subjects: The subjects of this research were 50 university study program students in 2018, 2019, 2020, and 2021 who were identified as being late in completing their thesis or final assignments from various study programs at universities spread across East Jakarta. In writing the subject, the researcher used a sampling technique, namely Accidental Sampling. Accidental sampling is a technique for determining samples based on chance, that is, anyone the researcher meets by chance can be used as a sample if that person is deemed suitable as a data source (Sovacool et al., 2020). Students are also final year students who have not completed their thesis. Based on the rules set by higher education regarding maximum study limits. The research time for questionnaire data collection activities was carried out for three months.

Techniques and Collections using instruments. The instrument was prepared based on indicator factors for student delays in completing the final assignment. The instrument developed was validated before being used as a tool to measure students' obstacles and difficulties in completing their final assignment or thesis. The instrument will be assessed by students on a Likert scale of 1 to 5. The instrument is given to students via the Google link. Apart from the instruments that have been developed, data collection is also used by conducting interview sessions with students who experience delays in completing their final assignments. Data is also collected as documentary evidence that shows students experiencing obstacles and difficulties in completing their final assignments or theses. Documentation data was obtained when the researcher conducted observations of students who were in the status of working on their final assignments or in the status of completing their thesis. Indicators of student obstacles and difficulties in completing the final assignment which are used as measuring tools showed in Table 1.

Table 1. Indicators and Factors Causing Procrastination

No.	Factor	Indicator
1	Physical Condition	1. Feeling lazy and lazy about working on your thesis or studying if you are not healthy 2. Postpone working on your thesis if your body is not fit

No.	Factor	Indicator
2	Self-Motivation	1. The desire to complete the thesis is low 2. Depends on external stimuli to achieve goals 3. The thesis is ignored if you have no interest in it
3	Self-Efficacy	1. The level of difficulty of a task 2. The level of confidence in one's abilities is low 3. Generality, namely the wide range of behavior that individuals are capable of carrying out
4	Self-Control	1. Low self-discipline 2. Be impulsive 3. Don't want to finish the thesis without being influenced by other things 4. Having a low self-esteem
5	Self-Awareness	1. Lack of recognition of emotions 2. Lack of accurate self-recognition, namely having knowledge of inner resources, as well as the advantages and disadvantages they have 3. Low self-confidence, namely a strong awareness of one's self-worth and abilities
6	Environment	1. Low supervision 2. Environmental disorganization

Data analysis technique with two stages. The first stage is to analyze the results of responses from students who are late in completing their final assignments in the instrument. This data was analyzed using SPSS Version 25.0 by testing data validation, mean, and standard deviation, and forming a bar chart. Then the bar diagram is interpreted and shows the students' obstacles and difficulties in completing the final assignment. The second stage of analysis is analyzing data from direct observations, interviews, and documentation by collecting all the data, and then reducing the data one by one. Data that is not intersecting is removed and only data that is intersecting is synchronized with other findings. The sliced data is made in table form. Next, the data from observations, interviews, and documentation are aligned. Return to the data from the instrument analysis to see the sliced data. The sliced data becomes the final stage in concluding and determining the factors that become obstacles and difficulties for students in completing the final assignment.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Results

The results found in higher education, students from the 2018-2021 class experienced delays for one semester because their final assignments or theses had not been completed. 22.22% of students have not attended a proposal seminar and have not completed their final assignment/thesis, 40.74% of students have attended a proposal seminar, but have not completed their final assignment/thesis, and 37.03% of students have attended a proposal seminar and have completed their final assignment. /Thesis. This data appears due to several factors and is based on the findings of the description of the questionnaire results for each factor. The distribution of the online questionnaire link in the form of objective questions was carried out in the 2018-2021 class which was given via personal chat. This questionnaire had the topic "Factors Causing Procrastination of Higher Education Students' Final Assignments". This questionnaire was distributed to 17 students who graduated late or who had not finished their thesis. In the questionnaire grid, there are favorable and unfavorable statements. A favorable statement is a statement that supports or favors the research object, while an unfavorable statement is a statement that does not support it. Physical condition showed in Figure 1.

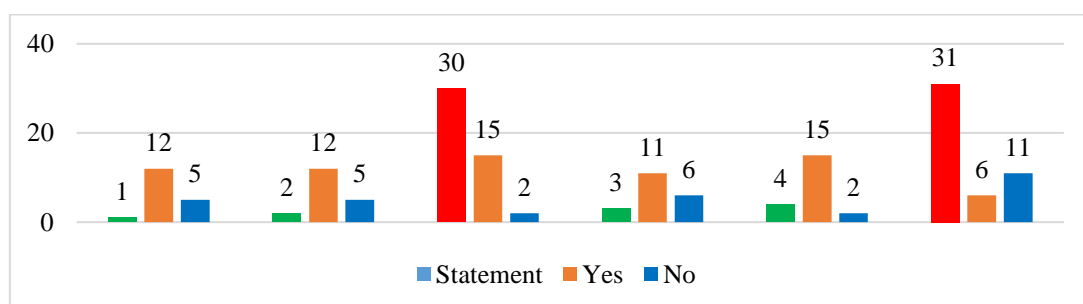


Figure 1. Physical Condition

In the physical condition factor, statements number 1, 2, 3, and 4 are favorable statements, while statements number 30 and 31 are unfavorable statements. Based on the bar diagram, statement number 4 (Recently I often feel sick so I tend to procrastinate completing my thesis) with a total of 88.2% (choice "Yes") is the most decisive statement compared to the other statements. Self-motivation showed in [Figure 2](#).

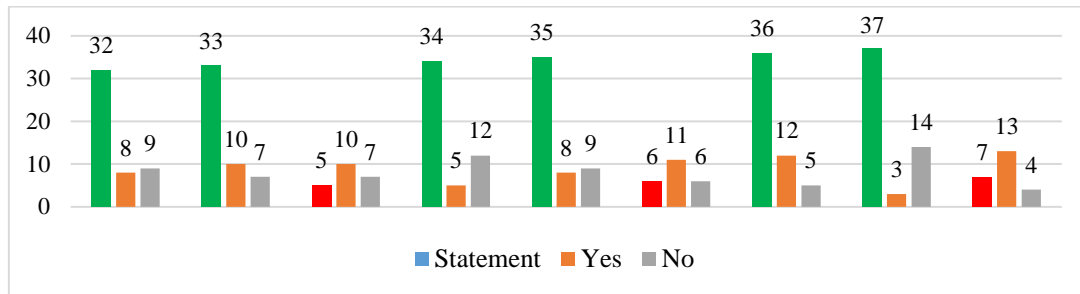


Figure 2. Self-Motivation

In the self-motivation factor, statements number 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, and 37 are favorable statements while statements number 5, 6, and 7 are unfavorable statements. Based on the bar chart, statement number 36 (I feel happier doing other work as a form of escape from the pressure of the thesis) with a total of 70.6% (choice "Yes") is the most determinant statement from the other statements. Self-Efficacy showed in [Figure 3](#).

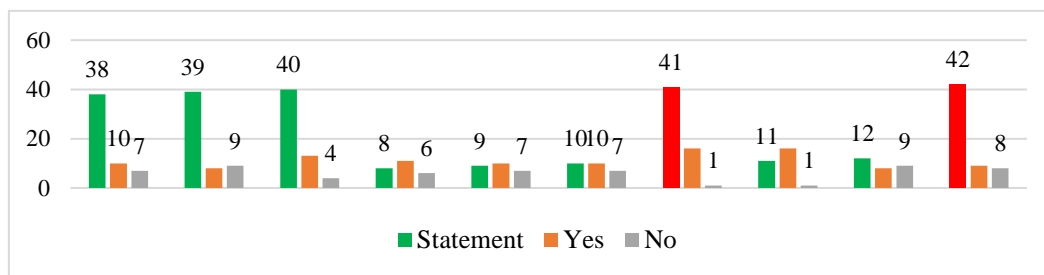


Figure 3. Self-Efficacy

In the self-efficacy factor, statements number 38, 39, 40, 9, 10, 11, and 12 are favorable statements while statements number 8, 41, and 42 are unfavorable statements. Based on the bar chart, statement number 11 (I need more concentration when working on the instrument) with a total of 94.1% (choice "Yes") is the most determinant statement from the other statements. Self-Control showed in [Figure 4](#).

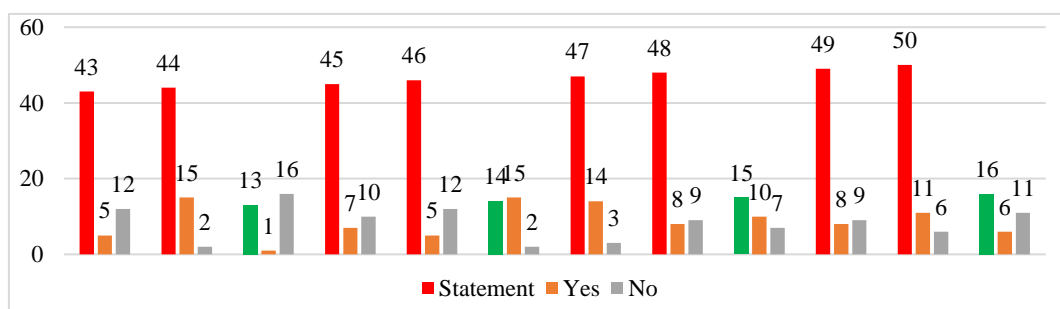


Figure 4. Self-Control

In the self-control factor, statements number 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49 and 50 are favorable statements while statements number 13, 14, 15 and 16 are unfavorable statements. Based on the bar diagram, statement number 13 (I carry out the thesis work schedule in an orderly manner) with a total of 94.1% (choice "No") is the most determinant statement compared to the other statements. Self-awareness showed in [Figure 5](#).

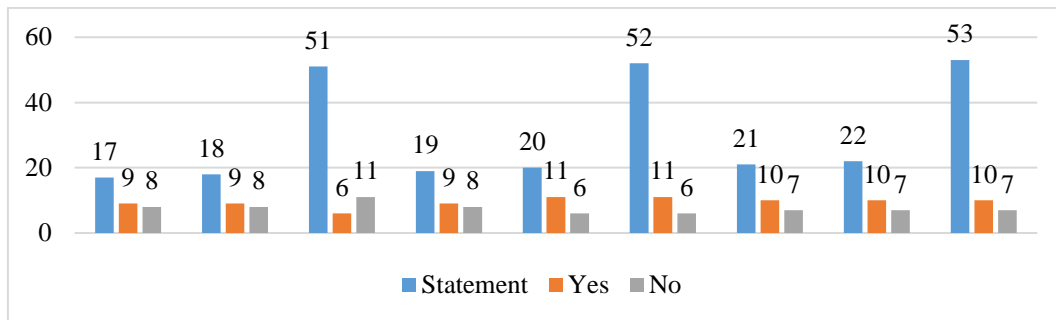


Figure 5. Self-Awareness

In the self-awareness factor, statements number 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, and 22 are favorable statements while statements number 51, 52, and 53 are unfavorable statements. Based on the bar diagram, statements number 20 (I become quickly irritated if someone asks about my thesis) (choice "Yes") and 51 (I can manage my emotions well even though I am under pressure when writing my thesis) (choice "No") with a total of 64.7% are the statements that are the most determinant of the other statements. Environment showed in Figure 6.

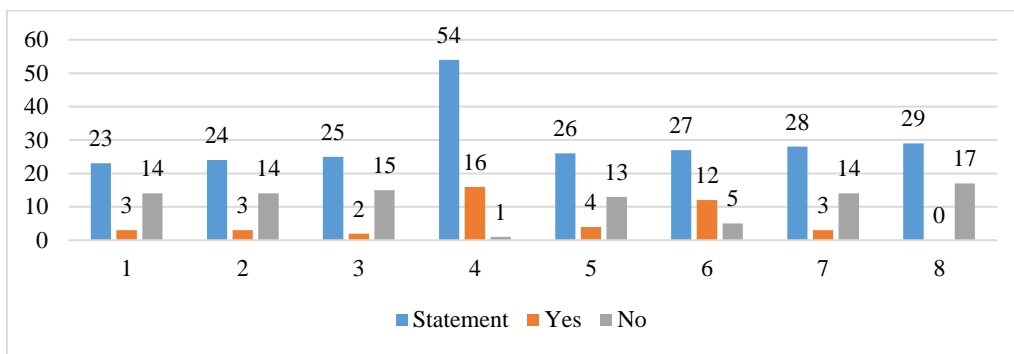


Figure 6. Environment

In environmental factors, statements number 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, and 28 are favorable statements while statements number 54 and 29 are unfavorable statements. Based on the bar diagram, statement number 29 (I have a schedule to work on my thesis with my friends) with a total of 100% (choice "No") is the most determinant statement among the other statements. Description of Questionnaire Results on Statements that Have the Highest Percentage showed in Figure 7.

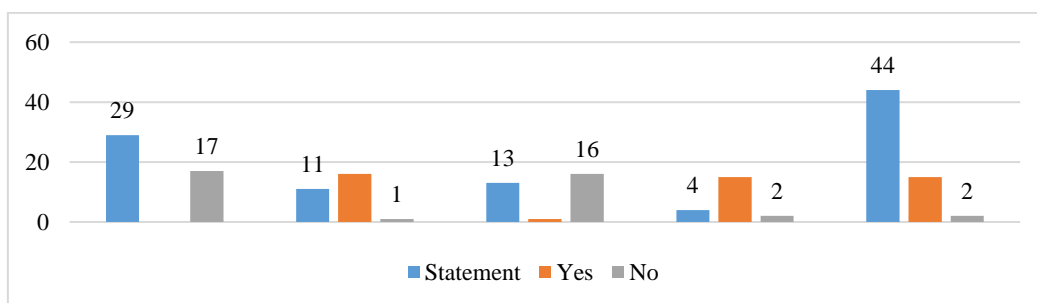


Figure 7. Statements With the Highest Percentage

Statements number 11, 4, and 44 are favorable statements, while statements number 29 and 13 are unfavorable statements. Based on the bar diagram, statement number 29 (I have a schedule to work on my thesis with friends - Environment) is worth 100% (choice "No"), statement number 11 (I need more concentration when working on the instrument - Self-Efficacy) is worth 94.1% (choice "Yes"), statement number 13 (I carry out the thesis work schedule in an orderly manner - Self-Control) is worth 94.1% (choice "No"), statement number 4 (I cannot continue reading the journal for the thesis if my body is not fit - Physical Condition) is worth 88.2% (choice "Yes"), and statement number 44 (I find it difficult to fight the feeling of

laziness in me when I want to work on my thesis - Self Control) is worth 88.2% (choice "Yes"). Coding results of observations, interviews and documentation intersecting with each other showed in [Table 2](#).

Table 2. Coding Results of Observations, Interviews and Documentation Intersecting with Each Other

No.	Indicator	Interpretation
1	Physical Condition	Students experience problems when working on their thesis when they feel unwell or their family is unwell.
2	Self-Motivation	Interest in completing the thesis is low due to lack of preparation
3	Self-Efficacy	1Low ability of students in the concept of writing a thesis
4	Self-Control	Have low self-confidence and lack motivation from yourself and motivation from others to complete the final assignment
5	Self-Awareness	Low self-confidence, lack of self-control and unsupportive knowledge
6	Environment	Supervision from lecturers and parents is low

[Table 2](#) shows that the results of observations, interviews, and documentation were found to be related to physical conditions. Students seem to experience problems in completing their thesis if they feel unwell. This was confirmed during the interview session, students thought they would be hampered in completing their thesis if they were not healthy. From the observation results it was also seen that students lacked self-motivation in completing their thesis, this was confirmed during the interview. Self-efficacy is also quite low. This is due to students' lack of knowledge and preparation. Students also experience difficulties if they do not receive full attention, motivation, and support from lecturers and parents. Students are of the view that lecturers who are too busy forcing students to complete their final assignments tend to have to be independent and receive less direction from the lecturer. The lack of support from lecturers and parents makes students pessimistic about completing their final assignments or these.

Discussion

It was found in this research that self-control, self-efficacy, and motivation were factors that hindered and prevented students difficult in completing their final assignment or thesis. It was found in the self-efficacy section that several answers doubted their ability to complete their thesis, such as having difficulty building self-confidence, feeling that the thesis assignment was too heavy, some respondents were busy outside campus and worked a lot outside campus so the thesis was difficult to complete and tended to be ignored. In the self-control section, this is an important thing for respondents in completing their thesis. It was found that there were respondents who worked on their thesis in a hurry, were not focused, were slow in understanding the thesis concept, and felt unable to complete their thesis. In the self-awareness section, a student must have the high level of awareness needed to complete a thesis, and not get angry easily if someone asks about when the thesis will be completed. Some respondents answered that they were not embarrassed to ask questions or express opinions about their thesis, and some respondents were quickly offended if someone asked about their thesis, this is part of the things that need to be paid attention to. There needs to be a strategy that must be used when asking students about their thesis final assignment. In the environmental section, environmental factors are factors that influence students' conditions, such as parents who are not indifferent to the thesis writing process and thus help the thesis writing process. Several respondents answered that the supervisor was very helpful when the respondent did not immediately complete the thesis by providing advice and providing strong motivation so that students became enthusiastic.

Another thing that caused delays in completing the thesis, some respondents answered that they were feeling anxious, worried, afraid, lazy, and bored. This finding is in line with findings in previous research which stated that students' feelings of anxiety can slow down the completion of their final assignments ([Aguilera-hermida, 2020](#); [Sarigiannidis et al., 2020](#); [Sayeed et al., 2020](#)). From the results of observations, it can be seen that when dealing with students who engage in procrastination, approaching students and asking about their progress with a good tone and communication as well as motivation and guiding them on what to do is the best way. Meanwhile, during interviews, the interviewees thought that dealing with students who engage in procrastination requires motivation, students often lose self-motivation, so students need motivation from lecturers, parents, and friends. In motivating, currently a method of communication is needed with students to motivate them, this is because the current conditions are to maintain distance in guiding students with an online system ([Nisa' et al., 2023](#); [Sailer et al., 2017](#)). This is felt by students as a lack of motivation from lecturers which has an impact on students' obstacles and difficulties in completing their final assignments. Lecturers have difficulty motivating due to the COVID-19 pandemic conditions and they cannot see students' psychological conditions when receiving guidance

from lecturers. Lecturers often do not know students' conditions and situations more closely, so students cannot be controlled and students experience changes and put aside their final assignments.

In the form of learning, students need time to adapt to the pandemic situation. According to the students, they have done this and helped other friends and had discussions, but still need intensive guidance from their supervisors. From the documentation, it was found that the root of the problem was that many lectures for the 2021-2023 academic year were not completed on time, due to changes in the learning situation such as the absence of face-to-face contact between students and their supervisors because on the one hand they had to complete other courses with assignments and on the other hand others need guidance from lecturers. This requires students to prefer guidance from lecturers by communicating online. This finding is in line with the finding above that the online mentoring process does not motivate students. The findings of this research are in line with previous research, feelings of laziness, anxiety, and changes in the method given in completing the final assignment have a big impact on students' delays in completing the final assignment (Galla et al., 2020; Magalhães et al., 2020; Pawlak et al., 2020). Students who experience problems and difficulties in managing time in completing their final assignments. Many students are more focused on work than completing their final assignments. This has a significant impact in contributing to student delays. It was found that students who work are not because they do not have the funds to complete their studies, but rather because the students enjoy working. Working too much has an impact on students' knowledge and understanding in completing their final assignments (Hilliard et al., 2020; Gilbert et al., 2022).

The implication of this research is to provide an overview to students, lecturers, and parents about the obstacles and where students' difficulties lie. The findings in this research are a guide for lecturers in preparing maximum guidance and motivation with an approach that does not use an online mentoring system but face-to-face. This research also has positive implications for students' self-improvement in motivating themselves. This research illustrates that students are low in motivating themselves. Through the findings in this research, students get a complete picture of the obstacles and difficulties experienced by students in completing their final assignments. The weakness of this research is that it did not dig deeper into each lecturer regarding the effectiveness of the guidance they provided. This research only focuses on students and does not receive many opinions from the lecturer's side. It is recommended that future researchers carry out similar research by examining it more comprehensively, both from the perspective of students, lecturers, and the environment around the students.

4. CONCLUSION

The research concludes that students who work on their thesis encounter many obstacles and difficulties such as internal factors, namely self-control, self-efficacy, and motivation. In the process of completing a thesis, students are required to learn to motivate themselves, control themselves, and develop high self-efficacy so that students can focus more on completing their final assignment or thesis. Factors that cause procrastination still often occur in higher education environments. Causal factors need to be developed further to determine student success in completing their final assignment/thesis. The implication of this research is to provide an overview to students, lecturers, and parents about the obstacles and where student difficulties lie. The findings in this research are a guide for lecturers in preparing maximum guidance and motivation with an approach that does not use an online mentoring system but rather face-to-face.

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