



## Analysis of Students' Difficulties in Completing Final Projects

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### Abstract

The process of completing an undergraduate thesis remains a significant challenge for students, particularly in translating research data into a coherent scientific paper. Difficulties often arise in managing data obtained from questionnaires, interviews, and documentation, leading to uncertainty about the initial and subsequent steps in academic writing. This study aims to explore the challenges students face in thesis writing and the role of academic supervisors in supporting the process. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach, the research was conducted at the Institute of Teacher Training and Technology (Institut Keguruan dan Teknologi) Lantuka, East Flores Regency, involving eighth-semester students and academic supervisors selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation, and analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive model. The findings indicate that students' difficulties are influenced by internal factors including challenges in topic selection, limited references, time management, lack of research experience, and psychological barriers and external factors, such as inadequate supervision, unsupportive environments, and insufficient faculty-level management. The study concludes that thesis completion is shaped by both individual capabilities and external support systems. Strengthening academic writing practices, improving supervision strategies, and providing institutional support through workshops and structured guidance are crucial for facilitating effective and timely thesis completion. The implications of this study emphasize the importance of collaborative efforts among students, supervisors, and higher education institutions to enhance the quality and efficiency of undergraduate thesis writing.

## Introduction

Education is the primary and most essential factor that determines the quality of a university student. Education is not a static entity but rather a dynamic process that continuously demands improvement. It plays a crucial role in shaping intelligent, peaceful, open-minded, and democratic students. Therefore, educational reforms in higher education are consistently carried out to enhance the overall quality of national education (Fadilah et al., 2022; Muspawi et al., 2020). Education also functions as an activity aimed at optimizing the development of students' potential, abilities, and personal characteristics. Educational activities are directed toward achieving specific objectives, known as educational goals. At a minimum, these objectives include four targets: the development of students' personality, the development of social abilities, the development of the capacity for further study, and the development of skills and readiness for employment (Arsita et al., 2022; Asmawan, 2016).

In accordance with Law No. 20 of 2003, Article 3, national education functions to develop capabilities and shape character as well as a dignified civilization of the nation in order to

enlighten the life of the nation. It aims to foster the potential of learners, including university students, so that they become faithful and devoted to God Almighty, possess noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and democratic, as well as responsible citizens (Sembiring & Aryani, 2024). Education is essentially a process of becoming, that is, enabling individuals to grow into their true selves in harmony with their talents, character, abilities, and conscience as a whole. Therefore, education must be capable of producing high-quality graduates who possess knowledge, master technology, and acquire sufficient technical skills and life competencies. Education is a long-term process whose success is determined by various factors that help students discover what they do not yet know and mature through teaching and training (Billa & Savira, 2023).

Efforts in higher education are expected to provide knowledge, insight, skills, and expertise to students in order to develop both their talents and personality. Higher education has a strategic function in exploring and fostering the potential of students so that it can be sharpened and developed into quality graduates (Sion et al., 2025). The noble purpose of higher education is to develop students' potential so that they become individuals who are faithful and devoted to God Almighty, in addition to being of noble character, healthy, knowledgeable, skilled, creative, independent, competent, and cultured. At present, higher education is not merely a mechanism for producing graduates who are intelligent and ready to enter the workforce (Haliza & Perkasa, 2024; Lusi et al., 2023). The purpose of assigning a final project or thesis is to provide students with a learning experience in solving scientific problems. In writing their thesis, students must be able to integrate knowledge and skills in analyzing, understanding, describing, and explaining issues related to their field of study (Fajri et al., 2024). However, many students still encounter difficulties in completing their thesis due to several factors, one of which is low self-motivation. In addition, many students lack sufficient knowledge of scientific writing, which hampers the thesis-writing process. Another challenge is determining a research title, often caused by a limited understanding of higher education itself (Febrina et al., 2019; Umriana, 2019).

Higher education must be able to enlighten its students to understand the essence of identity in a religious sense and enable them to act based on noble morals within society. This is emphasized in Article 1 of Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, which stipulates that education in higher education institutions is a conscious and planned effort to develop students' potential, encompassing spiritual strength, self-awareness, personality, intelligence, noble character, and skills that benefit themselves, society, the nation, and the state (Fukui, 2024; Winarti, 2021). Higher education is defined as a formal educational institution above secondary school that primarily provides theoretical instruction in various branches of knowledge, while also teaching specific skills. As the highest stage of formal education, higher education prepares students to develop their competencies before entering real life. Procedurally, students' abilities and readiness are tested through a final project in which they demonstrate understanding of research problems (Vieno et al., 2022). Thesis writing is valuable for students to measure their level of knowledge and comprehension in critically examining phenomena that occur in human life from a scientific perspective, based on the knowledge acquired during their studies. Thesis writing also requires proper guidance as an effective method to achieve maximum and high-quality outcomes in students' scientific research (Fatia et al., 2024; Jeremy et al., 2021).

Every student who experiences anxiety is likely to suffer a decline in academic performance, particularly in memory function, when such anxiety arises within the individual. Increasing levels of anxiety may affect students' cognitive, affective, and behavioral domains in completing their final assignments (Ahmad et al., 2023; Maulidia & Sulistyanningrum, 2021).

Writing a thesis indirectly represents a form of adjustment for students who are accustomed to receiving material from lecturers and books, transitioning into individuals who must narrate a phenomenon in a scientific and structured manner. In reality, many final-year students encounter obstacles in completing their theses (Nugraheni, 2018). Generally, students engaged in writing a scientific work face their own challenges, which in turn trigger difficulties in completing the final project. The types of difficulties vary, ranging from minor to major issues. A lack of motivation is one of the inhibiting factors for students in completing their theses. Low motivation may lead to procrastination, laziness, and eventually cause students to graduate beyond the standard study period at the undergraduate level (Susetyo & Noermanzah, 2020). Delays in thesis completion can also be attributed to insufficient family support. Family plays an essential role in influencing students' academic performance; when students are motivated by their families, they are more likely to complete their theses successfully. Another inhibiting factor is the peer environment. Peers, defined as individuals of similar age or maturity level, significantly shape students' academic persistence (Yu, 2021). The duration of thesis writing differs among students, affecting the speed at which they can graduate. Indeed, writing a thesis is fraught with challenges, ranging from difficulties in understanding the research phenomenon, lack of mastery of relevant theories, limited references, and other barriers. These difficulties often become perceived as burdens, develop into negative attitudes, and consequently lead to anxiety and loss of motivation. As a result, some students delay writing their theses, and some even decide not to complete them at all (Wardani et al., 2023).

Writing itself is a medium for expressing thoughts. It can be defined as a language production process, where ideas are transformed into written form. Among the various types of writing, academic writing such as a thesis holds particular importance. A thesis is a scientific paper that discusses a specific topic or field based on research, development, or literature review, prepared in accordance with scientific methods (Suleman et al., 2024). Thesis writing often becomes a source of stress that triggers anxiety, particularly for final-year students. Anxiety reduces academic performance, particularly memory function, when it emerges in students. Increasing levels of anxiety affect their cognitive, affective, and behavioral processes in thesis writing. This process requires students to adapt, moving from simply consuming knowledge provided by lecturers and textbooks to producing a structured and scientific academic work (Muslima et al., 2021).

The phenomenon currently faced by many final-year students reveals that obstacles are commonly encountered during the thesis writing process. Each student experiences unique challenges, ranging from small to significant difficulties. A lack of motivation often becomes a major barrier. Students with low motivation tend to neglect their thesis work, resulting in delayed graduation beyond the standard eight-semester study period (Lathifah et al., 2022). Family support also plays a critical role; when families motivate students, their thesis completion tends to progress more smoothly. Peer factors are equally influential, as peer groups shape students' persistence and determination. Since the time required for thesis writing differs among students, this variation directly impacts the pace of graduation (Jaha & Ate, 2024).

Thesis writing poses numerous difficulties, often perceived by students as heavy burdens. These challenges include limited understanding of the research phenomenon, weak mastery of theoretical frameworks, restricted access to references, and other barriers (Mishore & Abate, 2023). Consequently, such obstacles may foster negative attitudes, create anxiety, and diminish motivation. As a result, students often postpone thesis writing, with some even abandoning it entirely. Essentially, every individual faces difficulties in life. As believers, students are expected to trust that ease accompanies hardship. Emotional fluctuations and struggles in

completing assignments are common experiences among students, particularly those undertaking a thesis (Morrison et al., 2021; Tossell et al., 2024).

Every student aspires to earn a bachelor's degree, which marks the culmination of the undergraduate journey. Achieving this requires completing eight semesters of study and fulfilling the thesis requirement. Final-year students those preparing or currently writing their theses are expected to produce academic work based on research that contributes meaningfully to society (Bulqiyah et al., 2021; Fitria, 2022). However, students face multiple academic and non-academic challenges during this stage. Those who fail to balance these roles or manage stress effectively are highly susceptible to stress, particularly during thesis writing. Such challenges may cause graduation delays, resulting in personal and institutional losses. For students, delays reduce opportunities to develop and actualize themselves, thereby diminishing their productive years (Dassa & Naufal, 2023; Rahman et al., 2024).

The Faculty of Teacher Training and Education (FKIP) establishes specific regulations to monitor the progress of thesis writing. This process begins with the submission of a research title, followed by proposal supervision, and ends with the final thesis defense. Observations and interviews with students indicate that thesis writing is perceived as the culmination of scientific reasoning within their disciplines, structured systematically and scientifically to fulfill graduation requirements. Research must meet the criteria of being systematic, scientific, and planned. Systematic and scientific research adheres to established patterns and academic concepts, while planned research is deliberate and carefully designed.

The FKIP guidelines, as outlined in the 2013 Thesis Manual, stipulate prerequisites for title submission, including completing a minimum of 140 credits, passing research methodology courses, providing supporting academic journals, and presenting a proposal seminar. Supervisory assignments follow an annual pattern, with students allowed to choose topics aligned with issues encountered during field practice. Thesis supervision typically lasts for six months. Each program within FKIP implements regulations covering proposal seminars and thesis defenses. To qualify for proposal seminars, students must complete 140 credits, while thesis defenses require more complex prerequisites based on the Academic Handbook.

Interviews with program administrators reveal that student graduation rates have improved significantly since 2017, largely due to strategies and regulations established by department heads. Nonetheless, some students still fail to complete their theses due to internal factors, such as physical and psychological conditions, and external factors, such as environmental influences. Challenges also include poor communication with supervisors and lack of confidence in expressing ideas during consultations. These conditions reflect the diversity of obstacles faced by FKIP students. Ultimately, thesis completion is successful when students understand the goals and benefits of research. A thesis is not merely a requirement for graduation; it serves to test a student's ability to conduct research independently, analyze and interpret findings, and present them in a structured academic format. Thesis writing provides invaluable learning experiences, enabling students to address scientific problems systematically, draw conclusions, and produce academic contributions.

Students are individuals enrolled in higher education institutions pursuing learning at the university level. Each student selects a major that aligns with their interests and aspirations, with the expectation that the knowledge gained can later be applied in everyday life. Students, as a collective, are engaged in studying and deepening their knowledge so that they may eventually become more competent educators in the future (Azmat & Ahmad, 2022; Nenotek et al., 2022). To obtain a Bachelor of Education degree, students are required to complete at least 144 credits (SKS), which include the final project or thesis. A thesis is an academic paper

produced through a structured process of planning, implementation, and reporting of scientific research conducted by undergraduate students within the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education (Coker, 2022; Puspita, 2021).

During the thesis process, students are supervised by two academic advisors, namely the primary supervisor and the co-supervisor, whose role is to guide students in successfully completing the necessary requirements (Bashir et al., 2023; Moh'd Amer Hawari et al., 2022). However, the guidance process, along with research activities and the often-lengthy revisions, frequently leads to delays, thereby extending students' time to graduation. Therefore, it is essential to analyze the difficulties faced by students in order to identify both the types of challenges and the factors contributing to such difficulties. Information regarding challenges in preparing research proposals, conducting studies, and developing academic competencies is crucial for providing effective support to help students overcome barriers in completing their theses.

Understanding the causes of students' difficulties in completing their theses is of great importance, as such insights provide valuable information on academic obstacles that hinder timely graduation. Based on this, the researcher is motivated to conduct a study aimed at exploring in greater depth the difficulties experienced by students of the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education in completing their theses. The objective of this research is to identify the challenges encountered by students as well as the factors that contribute to these difficulties in the process of completing their final undergraduate thesis.

## Methods

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach aimed at providing an in-depth description of the phenomena observed in the field without any intervention or manipulation by the researcher. This approach was chosen because it aligns with the research focus, which seeks to comprehensively understand the dynamics of undergraduate thesis preparation and the role of academic supervisors in the process. According to (Purnasari, 2021), descriptive qualitative research is conducted to uncover the meaning contained within data that emerges from natural settings, in which the researcher serves as the primary instrument directly involved in collecting, analyzing, and interpreting the data. The researcher's presence in this context is not intended to alter social conditions but rather to naturally capture ongoing phenomena.

This research was conducted at the Institute of Teacher Training and Technology (Institut Keguruan dan Teknologi) Larantuka, East Flores Regency, considering that the location possesses characteristics relevant to the research objectives, namely the intensive interaction between final-year students and academic supervisors in the preparation of undergraduate theses. The research was carried out over a period of two months, from July 2025 to August 2025, coinciding with the active thesis supervision period at the institution. The research subjects consisted of eighth-semester students who were in the process of completing their undergraduate theses, as well as academic supervisors, including both main supervisors and co-supervisors within the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education (FKIP). Informants were selected using purposive sampling, a technique in which participants are chosen based on specific criteria relevant to the research, ensuring that the information obtained is highly relevant and in-depth (Sahir, 2021; Weyant, 2022).

The main research instrument in this study was the researcher. As the primary instrument, the researcher played an active role in planning, collecting, analyzing, and interpreting the data obtained in the field. To ensure the data collection process was systematic and directed, supporting instruments were also utilized, including semi-structured interview guides to

explore information from students and supervisors, observation sheets to record relevant behaviors and situations, and supporting documents such as supervision notes, academic archives, and administrative records.

Data collection was carried out through three main techniques: observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation was used to directly observe interactions between students and supervisors during the thesis supervision process, allowing the researcher to gain a real picture of the dynamics involved. In-depth interviews were conducted with students and supervisors to gather insights into their experiences, motivations, challenges, and strategies employed in thesis preparation. Documentation was used as an additional source of data to strengthen the findings from observation and interviews, including academic guidelines, supervision records, and other relevant administrative documents.

To ensure the validity of the data, this study adopted the four criteria proposed by (Creswell et al., 2007): credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility, or internal validity, was maintained through triangulation of sources, techniques, and time. Transferability, or external validity, was ensured by providing detailed descriptions of the research context so that findings may be applied to similar situations. Dependability, or reliability, was addressed by documenting the research process systematically to allow for auditability. Meanwhile, confirmability, or objectivity, was upheld through openness to the data obtained and the use of verifiable documentation as evidence.

Data analysis was conducted using the descriptive qualitative technique based on (Miles et al., 2021) interactive model. The analysis began with data collection through observation, interviews, and documentation. This was followed by data reduction, a process of selecting, focusing, and simplifying the data to make it more meaningful. The reduced data were then presented in descriptive narrative form to facilitate understanding and further analysis. The final stage was drawing and verifying conclusions, which involved linking data patterns with the researcher's interpretation to produce valid findings.

The research procedure consisted of several stages: preparation, data collection, analysis, and report writing. During the preparation stage, the researcher identified the research problem, developed the proposal, and determined the informants. The subsequent stage involved field data collection through observation, interviews, and documentation. Data analysis was carried out simultaneously from the beginning of the data collection process, employing reduction, presentation, and verification techniques. The final stage was report writing, where the analysis results were interpreted and presented in the form of a scientific paper. Through this procedure, the study is expected to provide a comprehensive description of the phenomena under investigation.

## **Results and Discussion**

The final project, commonly referred to as an undergraduate thesis, is one of the compulsory academic requirements that must be fulfilled by final-year students in order to obtain a bachelor's degree, particularly in the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education (FKIP). A thesis is not merely perceived as a written work, but rather as a concrete form of the student's ability to integrate knowledge, skills, and scientific attitudes acquired throughout the course of study. In other words, the thesis serves as evidence that the student has undergone a comprehensive learning process, ranging from mastery of theory to its application in research. In classical literature, Purwadarminta (2005, cited in *Jurnal Psikologi Universitas Diponegoro*, 2006) defines a thesis as a scientific work required as part of academic education in higher education institutions and as a primary prerequisite for obtaining a bachelor's degree.

Essentially, a thesis is a research report prepared based on scientific approaches and in accordance with established methodological principles. The research conducted by students generally originates from phenomena, problems, or issues relevant to their field of study. The Guidelines for Writing Undergraduate Theses published by Institut Keguruan dan Teknologi Larantuka (IKTL, 2013) emphasize that a thesis is a scientific work that represents the culmination of scientific reasoning processes in accordance with one's discipline. Thus, a thesis is not merely an administrative formality, but also an academic responsibility for every student.

Writing a thesis requires mastery of multiple areas of knowledge. Within the FKIP context, for instance, students must understand statistics to analyze data, research methodology to develop a scientific framework, learning strategies as a practical foundation for educational research, and learning evaluation to measure the effectiveness of findings. The IKTL Academic and Non-Academic Guidelines (2013) underline that mastery of these aspects assists students in preparing their thesis comprehensively. Moreover, the thesis writing process is supported by an academic supervision system, in which each student is guided by two academic supervisors. This process continues with a proposal seminar attended by supervisors, examiners, and peers who provide constructive input and criticism.

Although ideally the thesis writing process is well-structured through established guidelines and supervision systems, in reality, many students encounter difficulties in completing it. These difficulties are not limited to technical aspects but also extend to non-technical factors that affect the entire process. Muhibbin Syah (1997, p. 132) explains that learning is influenced by three main factors: (1) internal factors, namely conditions within the student such as physical, psychological, and academic abilities; (2) external factors, namely conditions outside the student such as learning environment, facilities, and social support; and (3) learning approaches, which refer to the strategies, learning styles, and methods employed by students in processing materials. In the context of thesis writing, these three factors significantly influence student success.

Based on interviews with several FKIP students who had gone through the thesis writing process, various difficulties were identified. One of the primary challenges is determining the research topic. Many students struggle when choosing a theme that aligns with their interests, is relevant to their academic field, and is feasible for scientific inquiry. This challenge is often exacerbated by the limited availability of literature or supporting references. Some students even reported spending several months just to formulate a proper research problem. Time management also poses a recurring issue. Final-year students are typically occupied not only with thesis writing but also with internships, student organizational activities, part-time jobs, and preparation for final examinations. This situation often makes it difficult for students to balance their thesis work with other responsibilities. Interviews with students revealed that delays in thesis completion were frequently caused by the absence of a structured work schedule. This aligns with the notion that time management skills are among the crucial factors for academic achievement.

Another significant barrier is limited access to data. Certain research projects require field data that can only be obtained through observation, interviews, or specific documents from institutions. However, access to such data is not always readily available. Some students encountered rejection when attempting interviews at schools or institutions due to bureaucratic constraints, while others faced difficulties in obtaining secondary data such as annual reports, policy documents, or official statistics. These constraints often slow down the research process, and in some cases, even force students to change their research topics due to unavailable data.

Psychological barriers are also noteworthy. Many students experience pressure due to the heavy burden of thesis writing, particularly when faced with demanding supervisors. Some reported losing motivation after repeated rejections of their proposals or chapters. Stress, anxiety, and mental fatigue are common occurrences during the process. This highlights that thesis writing not only tests academic ability but also mental endurance. Social support from family, peers, and supervisors becomes crucial in overcoming these challenges. Academic writing skills represent another major hurdle. Many students admitted struggling to express their ideas in a systematic, coherent, and academically appropriate manner. This problem is often linked to their limited prior experience in producing lengthy and complex academic texts. Most previous coursework only required essays or simple reports, leaving students unaccustomed to writing within a rigid academic structure. Interviews confirmed that some students faced challenges in constructing theoretical frameworks, building arguments, and applying proper citation styles.

Difficulties also arise during data collection and analysis. In quantitative research, students often struggle with limited mastery of statistics and analytical tools such as SPSS or other software. In qualitative research, challenges emerge in coding, interpreting data, and presenting valid findings. Interviews with supervisors revealed that many students did not yet grasp the fundamental differences between qualitative and quantitative approaches, leading to a tendency to conflate the two in their analyses.

Nevertheless, these difficulties are not insurmountable. Various strategies can help students complete their thesis successfully. First, universities can provide more intensive research methodology training before students begin their thesis stage. Second, supervisors should adopt more communicative and solution-oriented mentoring approaches to provide both academic and psychological support. Third, students themselves must build internal motivation and develop effective time management to complete their thesis on schedule.

### **Difficulties in Determining Research Topics**

Choosing a research topic is a crucial first step in thesis writing. However, this stage often becomes the greatest challenge for students. As expressed by MOP (Interview, July 11, 2025),

*“I am still confused about selecting a research topic that is interesting, matches my interests, is relevant to the field of education, and has sufficient data sources for research.”*

This statement reflects a common concern among students: the difficulty of finding a balance between personal interest, academic relevance, and data availability. If one of these aspects is lacking, the research process may slow down or even come to a halt. This aligns with Creswell’s (2014) assertion that the success of research is highly determined by the accuracy of topic selection. Therefore, topic exploration requires intensive guidance from supervisors to help students align personal interests with academic needs and available data.

### **Limitations of References**

Another common challenge is the difficulty in finding relevant references. MAW (Interview, July 18, 2025) stated,

*“I find it difficult to locate literature, journals, or previous studies that are relevant, especially for topics that are still new or rarely researched by students, so I need a long time to select and link them together.”*

This problem illustrates the reality that not all research topics have adequate sources, particularly when the topic is relatively new. This condition forces students to broaden their

literature search, even to the extent of using international references. However, language barriers, limited access to paid journal databases, and a lack of digital literacy skills often exacerbate the situation. In fact, having sufficient references is essential as a theoretical foundation and conceptual framework for research.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

The stage of data collection and analysis is the core of research, but it also presents significant challenges. YE (Interview, July 25, 2025) explained,

*“I had difficulty finding the right respondents who understood the questions I asked, limited financial resources, and confusion in conducting data analysis were major obstacles I encountered during the research process.”*

Difficulties in obtaining suitable respondents are often experienced by students due to limited access or lack of networks with relevant institutions. Moreover, respondents’ understanding of research instruments also affects the quality of data obtained. Financial constraints, such as transportation costs or questionnaire printing, add further burdens for students. In data analysis, students who lack mastery of statistical tools or qualitative analysis techniques tend to experience confusion, resulting in suboptimal research outcomes.

### **Technical Difficulties in Writing**

Writing a thesis requires specific skills that differ from writing essays or regular coursework reports. SLW (Interview, August 2, 2025) remarked,

*“I have not fully mastered the writing structure and academic writing skills. Writing a thesis requires scientific rules different from ordinary writing, so it demands special skills to understand what I am writing.”*

This statement reveals that many students are not accustomed to academic writing styles that demand accuracy, consistency, and the ability to construct arguments based on theory. Skills such as citation, referencing, and the use of formal language also often become challenges. Yet, these technical aspects play a crucial role in determining the final quality of the thesis.

### **Time Management**

Time management issues also frequently become serious obstacles. A student (Interview, August 4, 2025) stated,

*“I cannot manage my time in the midst of other activities, such as going out and gathering with friends in organizational activities, which often becomes a challenge and causes delays in completing the thesis.”*

This situation reflects the dilemma students face between academic responsibilities and non-academic activities. Involvement in organizations does provide valuable experience, but without proper time management, such activities may hinder thesis completion. Students without a structured schedule tend to postpone work until deadlines approach, ultimately causing stress and lowering the quality of research results.

### **Psychological Barriers**

In addition to academic constraints, psychological aspects also have a significant impact. One student (Interview, August 5, 2025) expressed,

*“I feel pressured by questions about when the exam or graduation will take place from my peers, which can cause stress, mental fatigue, and even loss of motivation and enthusiasm in working on the thesis.”*

Social pressure from peers or family often worsens students' mental conditions. Feelings of being left behind compared to peers, along with external expectations, may lead to prolonged stress. If not managed properly, this condition can result in procrastination or even burnout. Therefore, psychological support and a positive environment are highly needed to help students maintain their motivation in completing their theses.

### **Lack of Experience**

Limited academic experience is also a contributing factor to students' difficulties. LS (Interview, August 5, 2025) admitted,

*"I may not be accustomed to the process of academic writing that requires critical thinking and questioning skills, so I feel difficulties at the beginning of the thesis process."*

This indicates that students are often unfamiliar with critical thinking or systematically constructing scientific arguments. Most of their writing experience is limited to descriptive coursework assignments, so when faced with a thesis that requires in-depth analysis, they feel overwhelmed. This lack of experience should ideally be addressed by providing courses on research methodology and academic writing training from the early semesters.

### **Environment and Support**

The learning environment and social support also significantly influence the thesis completion process. SL (Interview, August 4, 2025) stated,

*"I need a quiet place to work on my thesis, and having friends who can help improve the quality of the thesis influences the smoothness of the process."*

This statement shows that environmental conditions, both physical and social, play an important role in enhancing students' concentration and productivity. A noisy or uncondusive place certainly disrupts students' focus, whereas peer support can serve as a source of motivation and a medium for exchanging ideas.

### **Interpreting the Ecology of Students' Thesis Challenges: Pedagogical, Psychological, and Institutional Dimensions**

The phenomenon of students' difficulties in completing their undergraduate theses, as revealed in this study, cannot be understood merely as an individual struggle or a technical shortcoming. Rather, it represents a layered intersection of personal, pedagogical, and institutional dimensions that collectively shape the ecology of academic writing in higher education. Within this perspective, the thesis becomes not only a test of academic competence but also an index of how well universities nurture their students' intellectual autonomy and emotional resilience. Recent scholarship increasingly views thesis completion as a dynamic process of formation where cognitive mastery, emotional endurance, and structural support converge to define the student experience (Azmat & Ahmad, 2022; Bashir et al., 2023; Sion et al., 2025).

A crucial insight that emerges from both this research and contemporary literature concerns the uneven development of research literacy across undergraduate programs. Many students approach their thesis with fragmented understandings of methodology, design, and data analysis an issue that, according to Bashir et al. (2023), originates from the absence of consistent research-based learning throughout earlier coursework. Students often perceive research not as an integrated form of inquiry but as a disconnected academic ritual encountered only at the end of their studies. This finding resonates strongly with Moh'd Amer Hawari et al. (2022), who highlighted that inadequate exposure to academic writing conventions, coupled

with minimal supervisory scaffolding, contributes to a disjointed thesis-writing process. In this sense, the problem lies not only in students' limited skills but also in the fragmented pedagogical design that isolates research activities from everyday academic life. The current study affirms this structural gap, where methodological uncertainty and weak conceptual framing are repeatedly mentioned as persistent challenges by final-year students.

Another dimension that requires deeper reflection concerns students' access to scholarly resources. The limited availability of up-to-date literature particularly in regional institutions exposes a broader epistemic inequality within higher education systems. Mishore and Abate (2023) note that students in resource-constrained environments struggle to build robust theoretical frameworks because institutional access to subscription-based journals is often minimal. This scarcity, compounded by low digital literacy, restricts the intellectual horizon of research and reinforces dependence on outdated or secondary sources. Fitria (2022) and Puspita (2021) both argued that such conditions foster superficial literature reviews and weaken the conceptual integrity of undergraduate theses. The current findings echo this reality: students in Larantuka frequently confronted the challenge of navigating scarce references, a condition that mirrors the digital divide between metropolitan and peripheral academic institutions. Beyond a logistical issue, this limitation reveals how knowledge production in higher education remains unevenly distributed a structural problem that requires systemic reform in digital access and academic literacy programs.

However, thesis difficulties are never purely intellectual. They are also deeply psychological and emotional, manifesting through anxiety, stress, and fluctuating motivation. Recent empirical studies have reaffirmed that the emotional landscape of thesis writing is as critical as its academic dimension. Lusi et al. (2023) observed that academic anxiety among final-year students is strongly linked to declining self-efficacy, while Sembiring and Aryani (2024) demonstrated that proactive coping strategies significantly enhance psychological endurance during the thesis phase. These findings correspond to the narratives of the participants in this study, who often described exhaustion, pressure, and mental fatigue when progress slowed or feedback became repetitive. As Jaha and Ate (2024) aptly describe, the thesis journey is emotionally demanding it forces students to confront their intellectual vulnerabilities, sustain effort under uncertainty, and tolerate extended isolation. This emotional struggle, if unsupported, can easily spiral into avoidance or procrastination. Thus, the challenge of completing a thesis extends beyond cognition it is fundamentally about how individuals regulate emotion, sustain motivation, and derive meaning from the academic process itself.

The role of supervisors emerges as a critical mediating factor within this emotional and academic nexus. Ahmad et al. (2023) and Haliza and Perkasa (2024) emphasize that supervisor responsiveness and pedagogical empathy are among the strongest predictors of timely thesis completion. Students thrive when supervision is dialogic, constructive, and timely; they falter when communication is delayed or authoritarian. The current research reinforces this pattern: students who reported supportive supervision experienced reduced anxiety and greater confidence in navigating complex revisions, while those under minimal guidance exhibited frustration and stagnation. As Fatia et al. (2024) further suggest, supervision must be understood not merely as an evaluative act but as an intellectual partnership a relationship that sustains curiosity, scaffolds inquiry, and legitimizes student voices within academic discourse. In that sense, the supervisor's role is not to dictate but to accompany, transforming the thesis from a burden into a co-constructed learning space.

Time management and competing responsibilities further complicate this process. Dassa and Naufal (2023) demonstrated that ineffective time regulation, compounded by multitasking

between work, organizations, and social obligations, frequently leads to prolonged thesis timelines. Jeremy et al. (2021) add that procrastination is often driven by perfectionistic tendencies a fear of inadequacy that paralyzes progress. In the current study, such patterns are apparent as students articulate a continuous tension between academic discipline and personal distractions. This suggests that time management is less about scheduling and more about self-regulation how students prioritize, focus, and recover from setbacks. Billa and Savira (2023) extend this argument by noting that maladaptive coping strategies, such as avoidance and denial, perpetuate a cycle of guilt and further delay. Therefore, thesis completion requires a pedagogical ecosystem that not only trains cognitive competence but also nurtures self-management as a core academic skill.

The social environment family, peers, and institutional culture plays an equally decisive role. Wardani et al. (2023) confirmed that social support reduces anxiety and fosters persistence, while Rahman et al. (2024) observed that encouragement from family and peers enhances academic resilience. These findings mirror the present research context, where students repeatedly cited social isolation or unsupportive surroundings as triggers of demotivation. Yet, when students found solidarity through peer discussions or study groups, their progress accelerated. This affirms that learning, even in the context of independent research, is inherently social. As Vieno et al. (2022) suggest, academic institutions must reconceptualize “research skills” not merely as methodological mastery but as the capacity to collaborate, communicate, and construct meaning within communities of inquiry. Hence, the social dimensions of thesis writing often neglected in conventional pedagogy are in fact central to sustaining student agency and belonging.

Moreover, recent technological developments have further complicated students’ engagement with academic writing. Tossell et al. (2024) reveal that while digital tools such as AI writing assistants enhance linguistic accuracy, they risk diminishing students’ critical engagement when used unreflectively. In line with Maulidia and Sulistyaningrum (2021), who examined paraphrasing tools as a response to writing difficulties, it becomes clear that technological mediation must be pedagogically guided. The findings of the current research, where students faced both linguistic and structural writing challenges, suggest that institutions should integrate ethical digital literacy as a component of thesis supervision. Rather than resisting technology, educators must reframe it as a reflective tool that supports rather than substitutes students’ intellectual labor.

In synthesizing the findings of this study with broader empirical trends, one central conclusion emerges: students’ difficulties in completing their thesis are not isolated personal failings but systemic reflections of how higher education structures learning, support, and assessment. As Muspawi et al. (2020) argue, academic ability and motivation only flourish within environments that are pedagogically responsive and institutionally supportive. The current study’s context in Larantuka echoes this: the combination of limited references, constrained supervision, psychological stress, and managerial rigidity creates a landscape where student perseverance alone cannot ensure success. Therefore, reform must occur at multiple levels curricular, supervisory, and institutional. Embedding research-based learning across semesters, establishing sustainable mentoring systems, and integrating psychosocial support into academic advising are all crucial steps toward equitable thesis completion.

Ultimately, the act of writing a thesis should be reimagined not as an endpoint of learning but as a transformative space of becoming a site where students negotiate between knowledge and identity, rigor and resilience, solitude and collaboration. The findings of this research, when situated within the expanding literature of the past five years (Bashir et al., 2023; Fatia et al.,

2024; Sion et al., 2025), reaffirm that successful thesis completion demands the confluence of methodological mastery, emotional stability, and relational mentorship. For institutions like the Institute of Teacher Training and Technology Larantuka, this calls for a paradigm shift from procedural compliance toward intellectual formation. When thesis supervision becomes dialogic, when academic writing becomes a collective reflection, and when institutions view support as pedagogy rather than policy, then the thesis ceases to be a struggle of survival and transforms into a genuine rite of scholarly maturity.

The final project, commonly referred to as an undergraduate thesis, is one of the compulsory academic requirements that must be fulfilled by final-year students in order to obtain a bachelor's degree, particularly in the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education (FKIP). A thesis is not merely perceived as a written work, but rather as a concrete form of the student's ability to integrate knowledge, skills, and scientific attitudes acquired throughout the course of study. In other words, the thesis serves as evidence that the student has undergone a comprehensive learning process, ranging from mastery of theory to its application in research. In classical literature, Purwadarminta (2005, cited in *Jurnal Psikologi Universitas Diponegoro*, 2006) defines a thesis as a scientific work required as part of academic education in higher education institutions and as a primary prerequisite for obtaining a bachelor's degree.

Essentially, a thesis is a research report prepared based on scientific approaches and in accordance with established methodological principles. The research conducted by students generally originates from phenomena, problems, or issues relevant to their field of study. The *Guidelines for Writing Undergraduate Theses* published by Institut Keguruan dan Teknologi Larantuka (IKTL, 2013) emphasize that a thesis is a scientific work that represents the culmination of scientific reasoning processes in accordance with one's discipline. Thus, a thesis is not merely an administrative formality, but also an academic responsibility for every student.

Writing a thesis requires mastery of multiple areas of knowledge. Within the FKIP context, for instance, students must understand statistics to analyze data, research methodology to develop a scientific framework, learning strategies as a practical foundation for educational research, and learning evaluation to measure the effectiveness of findings. The *IKTL Academic and Non-Academic Guidelines (2013)* underline that mastery of these aspects assists students in preparing their thesis comprehensively. Moreover, the thesis writing process is supported by an academic supervision system, in which each student is guided by two academic supervisors. This process continues with a proposal seminar attended by supervisors, examiners, and peers who provide constructive input and criticism.

Although ideally the thesis writing process is well-structured through established guidelines and supervision systems, in reality, many students encounter difficulties in completing it. These difficulties are not limited to technical aspects but also extend to non-technical factors that affect the entire process. Muhibbin Syah (1997, p. 132) explains that learning is influenced by three main factors: (1) internal factors, namely conditions within the student such as physical, psychological, and academic abilities; (2) external factors, namely conditions outside the student such as learning environment, facilities, and social support; and (3) learning approaches, which refer to the strategies, learning styles, and methods employed by students in processing materials. In the context of thesis writing, these three factors significantly influence student success.

Based on interviews with several FKIP students who had gone through the thesis writing process, various difficulties were identified. One of the primary challenges is determining the research topic. Many students struggle when choosing a theme that aligns with their interests,

is relevant to their academic field, and is feasible for scientific inquiry. This challenge is often exacerbated by the limited availability of literature or supporting references. Some students even reported spending several months just to formulate a proper research problem.

Time management also poses a recurring issue. Final-year students are typically occupied not only with thesis writing but also with internships, student organizational activities, part-time jobs, and preparation for final examinations. This situation often makes it difficult for students to balance their thesis work with other responsibilities. Interviews with students revealed that delays in thesis completion were frequently caused by the absence of a structured work schedule. This aligns with the notion that time management skills are among the crucial factors for academic achievement.

Another significant barrier is limited access to data. Certain research projects require field data that can only be obtained through observation, interviews, or specific documents from institutions. However, access to such data is not always readily available. Some students encountered rejection when attempting interviews at schools or institutions due to bureaucratic constraints, while others faced difficulties in obtaining secondary data such as annual reports, policy documents, or official statistics. These constraints often slow down the research process, and in some cases, even force students to change their research topics due to unavailable data.

Psychological barriers are also noteworthy. Many students experience pressure due to the heavy burden of thesis writing, particularly when faced with demanding supervisors. Some reported losing motivation after repeated rejections of their proposals or chapters. Stress, anxiety, and mental fatigue are common occurrences during the process. This highlights that thesis writing not only tests academic ability but also mental endurance. Social support from family, peers, and supervisors becomes crucial in overcoming these challenges.

Academic writing skills represent another major hurdle. Many students admitted struggling to express their ideas in a systematic, coherent, and academically appropriate manner. This problem is often linked to their limited prior experience in producing lengthy and complex academic texts. Most previous coursework only required essays or simple reports, leaving students unaccustomed to writing within a rigid academic structure. Interviews confirmed that some students faced challenges in constructing theoretical frameworks, building arguments, and applying proper citation styles. Difficulties also arise during data collection and analysis. In quantitative research, students often struggle with limited mastery of statistics and analytical tools such as SPSS or other software. In qualitative research, challenges emerge in coding, interpreting data, and presenting valid findings. Interviews with supervisors revealed that many students did not yet grasp the fundamental differences between qualitative and quantitative approaches, leading to a tendency to conflate the two in their analyses.

Nevertheless, these difficulties are not insurmountable. Various strategies can help students complete their thesis successfully. First, universities can provide more intensive research methodology training before students begin their thesis stage. Second, supervisors should adopt more communicative and solution-oriented mentoring approaches to provide both academic and psychological support. Third, students themselves must build internal motivation and develop effective time management to complete their thesis on schedule.

In conclusion, thesis writing is a complex and multidimensional process. The challenges faced by students stem not only from academic aspects but also from personal, psychological, and environmental factors. However, with appropriate support from institutions, supervisors, and social networks, these challenges can be addressed. Ultimately, the thesis serves as a

meaningful learning medium and an essential preparation for students before entering the workforce or pursuing further education.

### **Difficulties in Determining Research Topics**

Choosing a research topic is a crucial first step in thesis writing. However, this stage often becomes the greatest challenge for students. As expressed by MOP (Interview, July 11, 2025),

*“I am still confused about selecting a research topic that is interesting, matches my interests, is relevant to the field of education, and has sufficient data sources for research.”*

This statement reflects a common concern among students: the difficulty of finding a balance between personal interest, academic relevance, and data availability. If one of these aspects is lacking, the research process may slow down or even come to a halt. This aligns with Creswell’s (2014) assertion that the success of research is highly determined by the accuracy of topic selection. Therefore, topic exploration requires intensive guidance from supervisors to help students align personal interests with academic needs and available data.

### **Limitations of References**

Another common challenge is the difficulty in finding relevant references. MAW (Interview, July 18, 2025) stated,

*“I find it difficult to locate literature, journals, or previous studies that are relevant, especially for topics that are still new or rarely researched by students, so I need a long time to select and link them together.”*

This problem illustrates the reality that not all research topics have adequate sources, particularly when the topic is relatively new. This condition forces students to broaden their literature search, even to the extent of using international references. However, language barriers, limited access to paid journal databases, and a lack of digital literacy skills often exacerbate the situation. In fact, having sufficient references is essential as a theoretical foundation and conceptual framework for research.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

The stage of data collection and analysis is the core of research, but it also presents significant challenges. YE (Interview, July 25, 2025) explained,

*“I had difficulty finding the right respondents who understood the questions I asked, limited financial resources, and confusion in conducting data analysis were major obstacles I encountered during the research process.”*

Difficulties in obtaining suitable respondents are often experienced by students due to limited access or lack of networks with relevant institutions. Moreover, respondents’ understanding of research instruments also affects the quality of data obtained. Financial constraints, such as transportation costs or questionnaire printing, add further burdens for students. In data analysis, students who lack mastery of statistical tools or qualitative analysis techniques tend to experience confusion, resulting in suboptimal research outcomes.

### **Technical Difficulties in Writing**

Writing a thesis requires specific skills that differ from writing essays or regular coursework reports. SLW (Interview, August 2, 2025) remarked,

*“I have not fully mastered the writing structure and academic writing skills. Writing a thesis requires scientific rules different from ordinary writing, so it demands special skills to understand what I am writing.”*

This statement reveals that many students are not accustomed to academic writing styles that demand accuracy, consistency, and the ability to construct arguments based on theory. Skills such as citation, referencing, and the use of formal language also often become challenges. Yet, these technical aspects play a crucial role in determining the final quality of the thesis.

### **Time Management**

Time management issues also frequently become serious obstacles. A student (Interview, August 4, 2025) stated,

*“I cannot manage my time in the midst of other activities, such as going out and gathering with friends in organizational activities, which often becomes a challenge and causes delays in completing the thesis.”*

This situation reflects the dilemma students face between academic responsibilities and non-academic activities. Involvement in organizations does provide valuable experience, but without proper time management, such activities may hinder thesis completion. Students without a structured schedule tend to postpone work until deadlines approach, ultimately causing stress and lowering the quality of research results.

### **Psychological Barriers**

In addition to academic constraints, psychological aspects also have a significant impact. One student (Interview, August 5, 2025) expressed,

*“I feel pressured by questions about when the exam or graduation will take place from my peers, which can cause stress, mental fatigue, and even loss of motivation and enthusiasm in working on the thesis.”*

Social pressure from peers or family often worsens students’ mental conditions. Feelings of being left behind compared to peers, along with external expectations, may lead to prolonged stress. If not managed properly, this condition can result in procrastination or even burnout. Therefore, psychological support and a positive environment are highly needed to help students maintain their motivation in completing their theses.

### **Lack of Experience**

Limited academic experience is also a contributing factor to students’ difficulties. LS (Interview, August 5, 2025) admitted,

*“I may not be accustomed to the process of academic writing that requires critical thinking and questioning skills, so I feel difficulties at the beginning of the thesis process.”*

This indicates that students are often unfamiliar with critical thinking or systematically constructing scientific arguments. Most of their writing experience is limited to descriptive coursework assignments, so when faced with a thesis that requires in-depth analysis, they feel overwhelmed. This lack of experience should ideally be addressed by providing courses on research methodology and academic writing training from the early semesters.

### **Environment and Support**

The learning environment and social support also significantly influence the thesis completion process. SL (Interview, August 4, 2025) stated,

*“I need a quiet place to work on my thesis, and having friends who can help improve the quality of the thesis influences the smoothness of the process.”*

This statement shows that environmental conditions, both physical and social, play an important role in enhancing students’ concentration and productivity. A noisy or uncondusive place certainly disrupts students’ focus, whereas peer support can serve as a source of motivation and a medium for exchanging ideas.

### **Interpreting the Ecology of Students’ Thesis Challenges: Pedagogical, Psychological, and Institutional Dimensions**

The fact of undergraduates having problems with writing their theses, as explained in the given research, cannot be interpreted either as a personal battle or a technical flaw. Instead, it is a multi-stratified intersection of individual, pedagogical, and institutional levels, which together form the academic writing environment of higher education. In this regard, the thesis is also a test of academic competency as well as a pointer of the effectiveness with which universities develop intellectual autonomy and emotional resilience in students. Modern studies are beginning to conceptualize the thesis completion as an active form of formation where cognitive mastery, emotional endurance and structural support co-converge to define the student experience (Azmat and Ahmad, 2022; Bashir et al., 2023; Sion et al., 2025).

An interesting observation that can be drawn out of this study and other modern literature is a contributing factor to the discrepancy in the development of research literacy between undergraduate programmes. Numerous students start writing their theses with a piecemeal knowledge of methodology, design and data analysis, a problem that, as reported by Bashir et al. (2023), is due to the lack of a uniform research-based learning in previous work in the course. Students often view research as a solitary scholarly ritual and not an embedded form of investigation, a phenomenon they only encounter as their studies come to an end. This observation is well supported by the results of Moh’d Amer Hawari et al. (2022), who stressed that the lack of exposure to academic writing conventions and light scaffolding by supervisors are the reasons to adopt a disorganized thesis-writing process. The issue, therefore, is not only in the deficiencies of the skills of students but also a discontinuous pedagogical structure, in which research activities are not connected with the daily life of academic activity.

This structural gap is supported in the current study, which indicates that methodological uncertainty and poor conceptual framing are mentioned repeatedly as the ongoing concerns among final-year students, hence the necessity to implement more consistent research literacy efforts in the undergraduate curriculum.

The other aspect that needs further consideration involves access of academic materials to students. This is due to a wider epistemic inequity in higher education systems since limited access to current literature, especially in regional institutions. Mishore and Abate (2023) note that learners in resource-restricted settings cannot develop solid theoretical frameworks since the institutional access to journal subscription services is commonly low. This lack of digital literacy combined with a low level of intellectual digital literacy limits the intellectual horizon of research and supports reliance on outdated or secondary sources. Both Fitria (2022) and Puspita (2021) suggest that this kind of conditions encourages superficial literature reviews and compromises the conceptual integrity of undergraduate theses. The empirical results of the present paper also resonate with this fact: students at Lantana are often faced with the opportunity to face the problem of finding scanty references, which is a state of condition that also reflects the digital divide between urban and non-urban academic centers. This shortcoming, on top of a logistical problem, shows that knowledge production within higher

education is unevenly developed and is a structural issue that needs to be transformed systematically in digital access and academic literacy courses.

Nonetheless, the challenges that are related to writing a thesis are not just intellectual but also highly psychological and emotional as they are reflected in the form of anxiety, stress, and a change of motivation. Recent empirical research proves that the emotional terrain of thesis composition is as severe as its educational aspect. Lusi et al. (2023) noted that a strong association between academic anxiety and final-year students is the decreasing self-efficacy, whereas Sembiring and Aryani (2024) showed that proactive coping mechanism has a significant positive impact on psychological endurance during the thesis stage. These results are in agreement with the reports by the participants in this study where they frequently talked of exhaustion, pressure, and mental fatigue when there was a slow flow or repetition in feedback. The thesis journey is, as Jaha and Ate (2024) admit, an emotionally exhausting process; it makes students face their intellectual weaknesses, continue working with no certainty, and endure a period of harsh isolation. Unless supported, this emotional struggle may easily lead to avoidance or procrastination. Therefore, the problem of thesis completion is not only a matter of cognition; it is one of the primary aspects of how people control themselves and are motivated as well as derive meaning out of the very academic process.

Supervisors role turns out as a very important mediational factor in this emotional and academic nexus. According to Ahmad et al. (2023) and Haliza and Perkasa (2024), one of the best predictors of timely completion of a thesis is supervisor responsiveness and pedagogical empathy. Students perform well if supervision is dialogic, constructive and timely and poorly when supervision is authoritarian and delayed. This tendency is supported by the current study: students that were given positive feedback on supervision felt less anxiety and more confident in their ability to complete complex revisions and those with little to no guidance were frustrated and stagnated. As Fatia et al. (2024) also posit, supervision should be perceived more as an intellectual collaboration, as an act that nurtures curiosity, supports inquiry, and authorises student voices in the academic discourse than simply an evaluative act. In that regard, the role of a supervisor is not to dictate but rather to coexist with, converting the thesis into a learning co-construction space.

This process is also complicated by time management and conflicting duties. Dassa and Naufal (2023) showed that poor management of time resources, combined with the experience of both professional tasks, organisational works, and social professional responsibilities, often leads to long thesis deadlines. Jeremy et al. (2021) further contribute that perfectionistic traits and fear of incompetence that cripples the development is often the cause of procrastination. Such trends can be observed in the current case study, where the students are able to describe a consistent conflict between school discipline and individual distractions. This implies that time management is not really about time and schedule, but a self regulation process, how students plan, concentrate, and bounce back. Billa and Savira (2023) build on this idea and state that avoidance and denial are maladaptive coping mechanisms that contribute to a vicious cycle of guilt and additional procrastination. This means that a pedagogical ecosystem that fosters cognitive competence, and at the same time, allows the development of self-management as an essential academic skill is needed to complete the thesis.

The same decisive role is played by the social environment such as family, peers and institutional culture. Wardani et al. (2023), established that social support decreases anxiety and helps to stay persistent, and Rahman et al. (2024) found that family and peer support boosted the academic resilience. The findings of these authors reflect the setting of the current study, where students consistently pointed to social isolation or unsupportive environments as

the cause of demotivation. However, students found strength in peer discussions or study groups, and their development speed increased. This confirms that even in circumstances of independent research learning is social in nature. According to Vieno et al. (2022), academic institutions should redefine the concept of research skills not as a mastery of methods but as the ability to work with people, exchange information, and build meaning in communities of inquiry. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that the social aspects of the thesis writing that are traditionally overlooked by the traditional pedagogy are, in reality, the key to maintaining student agency and belonging.

Furthermore, the recent technological advancements have only complicated the process of students being interested in academic writing. Tossell et al. (2024) also disclose that, as much as digital applications, including AI writing aids, improve linguistic accuracy, they pose a threat to inhibit critical engagement under unreflexive use. Following Maulidia and Sulistyanningrum (2021), who also discussed the use of paraphrasing tools as a reply to writing challenges, it is evident that technological mediation should be pedagogically oriented. The conclusions of the present study, in which the students have encountered linguistic and structural writing issues, indicate that an ethical digital literacy should be included in the institutions as a part of thesis supervision. Instead of being resistant to technology, teachers should rebrand them as thinking tools that reinforce not replace intellectual work done by the student.

When it comes to generalising the results of this research with the bigger trends in empirical evidence, one central point can be made: the problems faced by students in accomplishing their dissertation are not single personal performance aspects but rather systemic indicators of how education systems structure learning, support, and evaluation. The academic ability and motivation can only thrive in pedagogically responsive and institutionally supportive environments as stated by Muspawi et al. (2020). The context of the present research in Larantuka reflects this statement: a lack of reference material, the lack of supervision, the psychological pressure, and the lack of managerial flexibility builds an environment where the only thing that can ensure success is student perseverance. As such, the reform should be done at the multiple levels, including the curricular, supervisory, and institutional. The introduction of research based learning through the semesters, implementing a sustainable mentoring practice and the incorporation of psychosocial support into the academic advising are all steps in the right direction toward fair thesis completion.

Ultimately, the act of writing a thesis should be reimagined not as an endpoint of learning but as a transformative space of becoming a site where students negotiate between knowledge and identity, rigor and resilience, solitude and collaboration. The findings of this research, when situated within the expanding literature of the past five years (Bashir et al., 2023; Fatia et al., 2024; Sion et al., 2025), reaffirm that successful thesis completion demands the confluence of methodological mastery, emotional stability, and relational mentorship. For institutions like the Institute of Teacher Training and Technology Larantuka, this calls for a paradigm shift from procedural compliance toward intellectual formation. When thesis supervision becomes dialogic, when academic writing becomes a collective reflection, and when institutions view support as pedagogy rather than policy, then the thesis ceases to be a struggle of survival and transforms into a genuine rite of scholarly maturity.

## Conclusion

Understanding how to write or present research data in the form of a scientific paper is one of the main challenges faced by students during the thesis-writing process. Data obtained from various instruments such as questionnaires, interviews, and documentation often generate

multiple questions, ideas, and confusion in processing and presenting them systematically. Many students are unsure about the first step to take after obtaining data, as well as the subsequent stages required to transform the data into a complete research outcome.

Academic writing skills have been proven to be a key factor distinguishing whether students complete their thesis more quickly or more slowly. Students who are accustomed to writing from the beginning for instance, through producing scientific articles, internship reports, or other written works tend to find it easier to express ideas and process data when working on their thesis. Conversely, students who rarely or never practice scientific writing beforehand often encounter significant difficulties, making the thesis completion process longer and more challenging.

Based on interview findings, it can be concluded that students' difficulties in writing a thesis fall into two broad categories: internal and external factors. Internal factors include challenges in determining research topics, limited access to references, obstacles in data collection and analysis, ineffective time management, limited research experience, and psychological barriers such as stress, anxiety, and confusion in thinking. Meanwhile, external factors encompass an unsupportive environment and social support system, suboptimal faculty-level thesis management, and the role of supervisors who may not always provide consistent guidance, motivation, or assistance.

Thus, the completion of a thesis is influenced not only by the individual abilities of students but also by the external support surrounding them. Appropriate strategies such as improving academic writing skills through continuous practice, providing adequate literature, implementing effective time management, and ensuring communicative and responsive supervision are essential to minimize the obstacles faced by students. Collaborative efforts among students, supervisors, and higher education institutions are expected to promote more effective, efficient, and high-quality thesis completion.

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, several recommendations can be made. For students enrolled in the thesis course, it is advisable to communicate more frequently with peers to motivate each other, enhance writing skills, and maintain interpersonal communication with supervisors in order to adapt to the guidance provided. For supervisors, it is recommended to maintain and further improve communication with students, for example by establishing a mutually agreed upon and regular supervision schedule, thereby making the mentoring process more effective. Meanwhile, for FKIP administrators, it is suggested to provide support in the form of workshops or special briefings for students undertaking the thesis course. Such activities are expected to offer students clearer insights into thesis writing and foster stronger motivation to complete their work on time.

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