

Exploring EFL undergraduate students' academic procrastination in thesis writing: A narrative study in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

While a substantial body of literature has investigated the phenomenon of academic procrastination among undergraduate students, research specifically exploring academic procrastination among English as a foreign language (EFL) undergraduate students during thesis writing remains limited. To address this glaring gap, this narrative study aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the interplays of factors contributing to EFL undergraduate students' academic procrastination during their thesis writing process. By employing a purposive sampling technique, this study identified three EFL undergraduate students who volunteered to be involved as research participants. Semi-structured interviews were employed as the primary data collection method to collect the data from participants' live experiences. Through thematic analysis, this study found various factors contributing to EFL students' thesis writing procrastination, such as learners' inadequate self-regulated capability, language mastery, writing ability, supervisor guidance, and emotional regulation. Additionally, this study also found detrimental effects of thesis writing procrastination on EFL undergraduate students' wellbeing. By understanding contributing factors and hazardous effects of thesis writing procrastination, this study discussed possible interventions in order to mitigate and overcome thesis writing procrastination among EFL undergraduate students, which ultimately offers implications for future pedagogical practice and research. However, as this study relied solely on interviews for data collection, the findings may not fully reflect the complexity of the issue. Finally, the suggestions and recommendations of this research were also discussed.

Keywords: academic procrastination; English as a foreign language; Indonesia university student; self-regulated learning; thesis writing

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INTRODUCTION

Academic procrastination is conceptualized as deliberate delay and voluntary avoidance of the intended assignment (Steel, 2007) indicated by the tendency to postpone the completion of academic

tasks (Rothblum et al., 1986). From the situational perspective, several prominent scholars have emphasized defining academic procrastination as a shortcoming in self-regulation performance (Balkis & Duru, 2016; Senécal et al., 1995). In this regard, academic procrastination is associated with several factors, such as high-level anxiety (Solomon & Rothblum, 1984), low self-efficacy (Klassen et al., 2008), and low self-esteem (Senécal et al., 1995) that lead to frequent academic procrastination, which might result to problematic outcomes, namely severe personal productivity loss (Goroshit, 2018) and depression (Lindner et al., 2023). Moreover, procrastination has been found among approximately 30 – 60% of undergraduate students, which significantly affects their academic task completion (Goroshit, 2018). In this regard, lack of proper attention might result in the widespread occurrence of procrastination among students, which eventually leads to a cycle of academic underperformance. Therefore, it is important to seriously address this issue in order to significantly enhance students' academic performance and task completion.

In Indonesia, academic procrastination has been identified as a significant challenge for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) undergraduate students majoring in English Language Education (ELE) department, particularly during their thesis writing process (Pravita & Kuswandono, 2022; Wahyuni & Umam, 2022). Reportedly, the majority of students tend to procrastinate during their thesis writing process and even avoid revising and reviewing their thesis (Pravita & Kuswandono, 2022). This phenomenon arises due to the unique challenges that EFL learners face when writing a thesis. In spite of living in an expanding circle country, EFL learners majoring in English Language education are required to write their thesis in English. Consequently, without sufficient English mastery, learners would have difficulties in expressing their ideas and arguments in their thesis (Wahyuni & Umam, 2022). Additionally, to craft a strong thesis, learners are required to have sufficient academic writing capabilities, critical thinking skills, research methodologies, and research persistence. Any deficiency in these elements would inevitably pose a challenge which hampers learners' thesis writing progress as reported by a recent study (Boufeldja & Bouhania, 2020). This struggle can lead to negative emotions such as demotivation and anxiety, which can further fuel procrastination and hinder students' ability to complete their theses in a timely manner.

For the past few decades, numerous studies have been conducted to investigate academic procrastination in various fields and contexts (e.g., Goroshit, 2018; Lindner et al., 2023; Zhou & Hiver, 2022). However, to the best of the authors' knowledge, research that specifically focuses on EFL students' procrastination in thesis writing remains limited and underexplored. For instance, a past academic literature (Mudra et al., 2021) reported that academic procrastination thrives among learners with a higher level of writing anxiety during the research writing process. Similarly, a recent survey involving 12 EFL undergraduate students conducted by Pravita and Kuswandono (2022) highlighted that students' writing anxiety can intensify students' avoidance behavior, resulting in students' procrastination in the thesis writing process. Albeit these studies have partially illuminated the factors contributing to EFL learners' thesis writing procrastination, many aspects remain underexplored. This represents a significant gap in the existing literature and highlights the need for further investigation into the unique challenges and factors contributing to procrastination in this particular context.

To seal this glaring gap, this study aims to comprehensively understand factors contributing to EFL undergraduate learners' academic procrastination during thesis writing and its effect on EFL learners. Through exploring EFL learners' experience in thesis writing, this study is expected to give valuable insight into various factors contributing to academic procrastination during the thesis writing process. Furthermore, this study could provide deeper insight into the effect of procrastination on EFL learners' thesis writing progress. In doing so, researchers, lecturers, and learners can hopefully develop appropriate thesis writing strategies and interventions to mitigate procrastination during thesis writing. Thus, the research questions guiding this academic literature are;

1. What are the factors contributing to EFL learners' academic procrastination in thesis writing?
2. How does academic procrastination in thesis writing affect EFL learners?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Academic procrastination

As a complex and multifaceted behavior, the term “procrastination” has its roots in Latin, stemming from the combination of “pro,” which signifies moving forward, and “crastinus,” which pertains to the following day. This etymology elucidates the concept’s temporal aspect, which refers to the act of postponing or the tendency to delay tasks until a later time (Steel, 2007). This focus on future delay signifies a crucial aspect of procrastination, which is that procrastinators are often involved in a struggle between short-term pleasure and long-term goals. In this regard, Solomon and Rothblum (1984) pointed out that academic procrastination is not solely a result of poor study habits and time management skills but also the consequence of a complex phenomenon involving a combination of behavioral, cognitive, and emotional factors in which these elements interact and influence each other.

Behavioral learners often procrastinate due to several factors, such as ineffective time management skills, poor goal-setting, and failure in self-regulation (Steel, 2007; Tice & Baumeister, 1997). In this regard, Ziegler and Opdenakker (2018) reported that these behaviors are interconnected and potentially create a vicious cycle that reinforces procrastination. Without appropriate targeted intervention, learners would have difficulties in breaking free from this pattern. Besides the behavioral aspects, cognitive factors also play a significant role in procrastination. In this context, learners may struggle with maladaptive beliefs such as irrational perfectionism and fear of failure, potentially leading to self-doubt, task aversion, and eventually, procrastination (Deemer et al., 2018). Further, the state of learners’ affective factors, such as low levels of self-esteem, anxiety, and depression, can depress learners’ motivation and contribute to the increase of procrastination levels in academic settings (Rebetez et al., 2016).

For the past few decades, the consequences of academic procrastination have remained a subject of debate among several researchers. Interestingly, several prominent scholars posit that academic procrastination can bring certain benefits to learners. Chun Chu and Choi (2005), for instance, reported that through procrastinating, learners can promote their creativity during the incubation of ideas and innovation when tackling their tasks. In a similar vein, Choi and Moran (2009) discovered that some learners are inclined to procrastinate because they derive enjoyment from working under pressure and believe it leads to better outcomes. This indicates that procrastination might be a purposeful strategy for individuals who perform well under pressure and can deliver high-quality results. Recently, Abramowski (2018) found that learners who procrastinated on academic tasks reported feeling of better prepared, as they had acquired additional resources and had more time to contemplate various aspects of the problem. Based on these findings, it can be said that procrastination may allow certain learners to accumulate more information, consider diverse viewpoints, and approach tasks with a more comprehensive understanding.

Despite the potential benefits of procrastination for some learners, a substantial body of research emphasizes the adverse effects associated with this behavior in academic contexts. These detrimental consequences include psychological distress, academic performance degradation, regret, heightened anxiety, and avoidance of social interactions (Lindner et al., 2023; Steel, 2007). The negative impact of procrastination on mental health is particularly concerning, as it can lead to heightened levels of anxiety and stress. This, in turn, can create a vicious cycle in which the increased stress and anxiety levels could further fuel procrastination behavior among learners, making it more difficult for individuals to escape this pattern of procrastination habit (Lindner et al., 2023). Given these wide-ranging negative consequences, several studies have highlighted the importance of self-regulated learning in addressing academic procrastination (Klassen et al., 2008; Wolters, 2003).

Self-regulated learning

Zimmerman (2000) defines self-regulated learning as students’ capability to personally generate thoughts, feelings, and behaviors in order to attain predetermined academic goals. Self-regulated learning also means the students can regulate other factors, such as motivation, effort, and self-esteem, during their learning activities (Pintrich, 2000). In this regard, Demetriou (2000) highlighted three

important components of self-regulated learning. The first component is self-monitoring, which refers to how the students keep track of their current state or ongoing activities; having the capability to control, also known as the self-system; and self-modification, defined as directing the current applied skills and strategies for future activities. In this regard, students are active in monitoring their progress, reflecting, and then solving the existing problems to achieve their goals. In other words, students who are highly motivated as well as cognitively, metacognitively, and emotionally active in the process of learning can be considered self-regulated learners.

Self-regulated learning encompasses three dimensions, namely cognitive, metacognitive, and affective dimensions (Zimmerman, 2000). The cognitive dimension represents the way someone remembers, understands, and processes information (Zimmerman, 2000), which involves several strategies such as memorizing, note-taking, problem-solving, reorganizing, and rehearsal strategy (Pintrich et al., 1993). Another dimension that extends the cognitive dimension is the metacognitive dimension, which can be defined as a controller to direct and manage someone's thoughts and actions to achieve their goal (Pintrich, 2000). In this regard, metacognitive strategies consist of time management, setting goals, making plans, monitoring, and evaluating work (Zhang, 2010), as well as making decisions to conduct peer learning and help-seeking (Pintrich et al., 1993). Meanwhile, the affective dimension involves efforts to maintain goal-oriented behavior (Zimmerman, 2000), which encompasses several strategies such as setting a learning environment, using self-talk strategies, and regulating emotions during the learning process (Zhou & Hiver, 2022).

Regarding the three dimensions of self-regulated learning, some self-regulated learning strategies can also be applied in the writing process, including thesis writing. Some strategies to engage in the writing process are planning, idea generating, self-evaluating, self-monitoring, and reflecting (Magno, 2009). Further, there are three triadic self-regulatory processes in writing emphasized by Zimmerman (2000): environmental processes, behavioral processes, and personal processes. In terms of personal processes, it includes time planning and management, where learners should be able to manage and invest their time to write. Zimmerman and Risemberg (1997) further highlighted that independent thinking and self-discipline are pivotal for writing activity. In other words, students who can successfully plan, monitor, and evaluate their progress to achieve their goals, and commit to be disciplined in terms of time in writing, are more likely to finish their academic degrees on time. In contrast, a lack of motivation, which can refer to losing interest in the set goal, and ineffective performance control, including planning strategies, are some of the main personal limitations leading to poor self-regulation (Zimmerman, 2000). This failure of self-regulation may lead to procrastination (Tice & Baumeister, 1997), making it difficult to meet deadlines.

METHOD

Research design

This narrative study (Barkhuizen et al., 2014) is grounded within the constructivism paradigm (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). It aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the mechanical process about the factors arousing academic procrastination during thesis writing from the experience of EFL undergraduate students. As a research design, narrative inquiry enables researchers to elicit and transform non-narrative data into a story, allowing researchers to effectively convey their interpretation and insights delineated from the data (Barkhuizen et al., 2014). Further, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) describe narrative inquiry as magnifying glasses that assist researchers in exploring and understanding the occurred social phenomena. For these reasons, this design is appropriate for this study since it aids the researcher in scrutinizing minuscule details of participants' personal life experiences and provides interpretation in a more engaging and comprehensible way. In doing so, it can facilitate a deeper understanding of thesis writing procrastination and its factors within the most naturalistic settings possible.

Research participants

To ensure the relevance and richness of the collected data, this study purposively selected research participant candidates under several predetermined criteria. First, the research participants for this study must be EFL undergraduate students or fresh graduates majoring in English-related degrees. It is to ensure that research participants involved possess enough exposure to academic English and are familiar with the language demands of thesis writing. Second, the research participant needs to have experience in thesis writing. Lastly, the participant must undertake a bachelor's degree over four years. It is a crucial criterion that captures the experiences of students who encountered academic delays, which often reflect the presence of complex academic, personal, or external challenges.

After determining the participant criteria, the researchers started to recruit participants by abiding by the ethical procedures of participant recruitment recommended by [Hammersley and Traianou \(2012\)](#). In detail, the researchers seek assistance from multiple heads of the English Education Program from several universities in East Java, Indonesia. The heads then recommended several research candidates who met the research requirement, and afterwards, we sent several invitations to several candidates involved in this study. In this regard, the invitation informs the participant candidates about research objectives and participation conditions. Additionally, the invitation also informs the candidates about the potential risks of this study as well as the confidentiality assurance of their information. Lastly, it also includes the right of withdrawal for research participants at any given time.

As a result, three EFL female undergraduate students responded positively and volunteered to participate in this study. To ensure the participants' confidentiality, we give a pseudonym to each research participant. In this regard, the first research participant is given the pseudonym Anna. She is 23 years old and an EFL undergraduate learner majoring in the ELE department at one of the public universities in Jember, Indonesia. Currently, she is in her 12th semester and in her final part of her thesis writing. Additionally, she was born in a lower-middle-income family. We name the second participant as Bella, a 22-year-old female EFL learner who is currently still finishing her thesis as a 10th-semester undergraduate student of the ELE department in a public University in Surabaya, Indonesia. She was raised in a middle-income household. Lastly, the third participant is named Clara, a 24-year-old female who recently completed her thesis and graduated in the late 9th semester with a bachelor's degree in English Language and Literatures at one of the public universities in Jember, Indonesia. She grew up in a lower-middle-class family.

Table 1

Participants Demographic Profile

Pseudo Name	Gender	Age	Semester in University	Socio-economic Condition
Anna	Female	23	12 th Semester	Lower-Middle Income
Bella	Female	22	10 th Semester	Middle Income
Clara	Female	24	9 th Semester	Lower-Middle Income

Instrumentation

To illuminate the issue concerning thesis writing procrastination of Indonesian EFL undergraduate students, this study gathers verbal data utilizing a series of semi-structured interviews ([Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000](#)). In this regard, the utilization of semi-structured interviews can assist us in extracting the narration from the live experience of each research participant. In detail, each of the participants needs to go through several interview sessions. Each interview is conducted within the time frame of 30-60 minutes to avoid the potentially occurring interview boredom ([Barkhuizen et al., 2014](#)). To bridge the spatial gap between the research participants and researchers, each of the interview sessions is conducted in a digital environment via Zoom meeting conference and WhatsApp video call. The choice of employing either Zoom meeting conference or WhatsApp video call for each interview session is based on the preference of research participants. Before each interview session, the researcher asks for permission from every research participant to video record the interview. It is in order to keep and honor research participants' privacy rights. Additionally, in the interview, the

researchers make inquiries about procrastination in thesis writing following the interview guidelines adopted and adapted from previous studies (Rahman, 2019), which inquire about the following elements (1) thesis writing difficulties, (2) factors influencing thesis procrastination, and (3) effects of thesis writing procrastination.

Researcher reflexivity

This study follows a constructivist paradigm, meaning we believe that knowledge is created through interaction between the researchers and participants. In this regard, we see the participants not just as sources of data but as partners who helped to shape the findings of this study. As researchers with a background in ELE in Indonesia, we are well aware that our own experiences inevitably influence how we understand and interpret the participants' narratives. In this case, our familiarity with the EFL context helped us connect with the participants and understand the challenges they faced during their thesis writing process. However, we also realize that being too close to the context might create unexpected bias. To reduce this risk, we conducted peer debriefing and member-checking to make sure our interpretations were accurate and truly represented what the participants wanted to express.

Data analysis

To analyze the verbal data concerning the factors contributing to EFL learners' thesis writing procrastination and their effects, this study employs thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) following the analytical procedure recommended by Widodo (2014). In detail, after all the interview series is executed, we started to analyze the data by repeatedly and constantly listening to the recorded verbal data and further transcribing it to familiarize ourselves with the data. Next, we started to assign codes to the data and classified them based on the themes. We defined each of the emerging themes and named them based on their definition. Afterwards, we produced the interpretation based on the result of the theme analysis. Finally, before we presented the interpretation, we conducted peer debriefing and member-checking in order to build the data credibility.

Trustworthiness

To ensure the credibility of the interpreted data, we employ the trustworthiness method (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) using peer debriefing and member-checking techniques. In this case, both trustworthiness techniques could aid the researchers in establishing and maximizing the credibility and trustworthiness of their interpretation of the verbal data. In doing so, during the peer debriefing phase, we consult with one fellow researcher who is experienced in English Language Teaching (ELT) research to review and evaluate the findings of our study and the interpretation we draw from the findings. It is in order to receive constructive feedback, identify any potential biases or errors in our interpretation of the data, and ensure our interpretation is robust and credible. As a result, he suggests further refining Clara's interpretation data to slightly ease the reader's understanding of the results of our interpretation of Clara's experiences. Meanwhile, in the member-checking process, we shared the results of the interpretation with each participant via WhatsApp. We allowed them to review and provide additional insights or clarification, ensuring the results of our interpretation accurately represented their perspectives and experiences. As a result, all of the research participants in this study unanimously agree and contend with the results of their respective data interpretations.

FINDINGS

Factors contributing to thesis procrastination

This narrative inquiry study aimed to gain a comprehensive understanding of the elements contributing to thesis writing procrastination experienced by Indonesian undergraduate EFL learners. Accordingly, the research participants involved in this study narrated their experiences and disclosed myriad factors which legitimize their delays in thesis writing and as the study progressed, it becomes apparent that the research participants' narrative illustrated the intricate nature of thesis writing procrastination.

To start, an initial common theme identified through the participants' narratives is their struggle with self-regulation, particularly in adhering to established plans and achieving pre-set goals. In this regard, they confessed.

"... Initially, I had a plan for my thesis writing process. I had set deadlines for different parts of the thesis, like the title and background, and aimed to finish them by specific dates. However, due to various reasons, I was unable to meet the goals I had set ..." (Bella, February 20, 2024)

"... I set deadlines for each section ... but it did not work out as planned ..." (Anna, February 21, 2024)

"... When I'm working on my thesis, I set deadlines for myself ... but I always end up missing them ..." (Clara, February 21, 2024)

The interview excerpts revealed that Anna, Bella, and Clara initially had well-structured plans and goals for their thesis writing process. However, it becomes evident that various internal and external factors may have impeded their ability to effectively adhere to these plans. This indicated that research participants in this study cannot regularly monitor, execute, and regulate their activities to meet the predetermined objectives. Due to that, research participants were prone to being influenced by any elements, which inevitably hindered the progress of their thesis writing completion.

Building upon the answer given about research participants' failure to complete their thesis despite initially having well-structured plans and goals for their thesis writing, we speculate that certain tendencies or habits may influence their failure to meet their deadline. Consequently, the participants reported their tendencies to procrastinate in working on their assignments during their undergraduate years. This indicated a recurring pattern of behavior that likely influenced their struggle to adhere timelines and fulfill academic responsibilities promptly, as reported by the participants.

"... Usually, I do my assignment near the due date ..." (Anna, February 21, 2024)

"... sometimes, I leave my assignments until the last minute..." (Bella, February 20, 2024)

"... maybe because of the habit in my undergraduate day ... you know? If it is not a due date, then it is not a do day, so, I sometimes struggle to finish my assignment near the due date ..." (Clara, February 21, 2024)

Afterward, we tried to explore research participants' struggles in thesis writing to identify specific challenges and obstacles that may lead to academic procrastination in thesis writing. In this regard, they narrated:

"... truthfully, when I started to write my thesis, I didn't even know how to start it ... I got confused about how to write my idea in my mind ... I find it challenging to string words all together ... to shape and expand the topic into academic sentences, it is frustrating because I know what I want to say, but it's like my ability to convey my ideas falls short..." (Clara, February 21, 2024)

"... obstacle I have when writing my thesis is, I sometimes feel difficult to start writing. Sometimes I lack the idea and insight ... confused to deliver my idea on the paper ... it hinders me from writing my thesis ..." (Anna, February 21, 2024)

Based on the research participants' confessions, Clara and Anna expressed their difficulties at the beginning of their writing process, which indicated their struggle with thesis writing. First, both narrations clearly illustrated Clara's and Anna's inability to shape and expand their thesis topics into academic writing. This indicated a lack of ideas and necessary insights for developing their thesis. Additionally, they also described their confusion in articulating their idea and structuring their thoughts into meaningful writing, which impeded the process of their thesis writing. Further, in Clara's

case, her inability to translate her ideas into words led to frustration and, eventually, the delay of her thesis writing progress.

Besides their difficulties in expressing their ideas, the research participants also described several factors triggering academic procrastination in thesis writing. First, Clara recounted her difficulty in concentrating on thesis writing due to external distractions such as a noisy environment and the allure of social media on smartphones. According to Clara's statement, those distractors have a high potential to break her concentration in writing the thesis, and as a consequence, hinder her from completing her thesis. In this regard, she stated,

"... I get easily distracted by my environment, for instance, when I write my thesis in a noisy area, I can easily get distracted and stop my writing... also, smartphone and social media distract me from continuing my writing ..." (Clara, February 25, 2024)

While Clara's statement illustrated her challenges in concentrating on her thesis, both Anna and Bella confessed that the fluctuation of their emotional states plays an important role in their thesis writing process, as they stated during the interview.

"... battling with my fluctuating mood feels overwhelming ... There are times when waves of sadness and anxiety hit me, making it incredibly challenging to muster the motivation to continue working on my thesis..." (Anna, February 21, 2024)

"... I know I need to finish my thesis as soon as possible, but because of the difficulties ... it feels like facing the current, and I run out of motivation to write it sometimes, so I take a break from writing ..." (Bella, February 21, 2024)

According to the verbal data, both participants acknowledged their difficulties in thesis writing while shouldering negative emotions such as anxiety, sadness, and demotivation. The emotional turmoil indicated apparent emotional distress, which directly impacted both Anna's and Bella's ability to remain focused and motivated to progress their thesis writing. As a result, both of their thesis writing process were paralyzed whenever they were grappled with emotional challenges.

Apart from emotional challenges, Bella and Anna further reported challenges that occurred due to their interaction with their thesis advisors. In detail, we find that both participants experienced apprehension in seeking advisor feedback. Their apprehension stemmed from their lack of confidence in their writing and fear of negative feedback. Further, both Bella's and Anna's research advisors tended to delay in giving timely feedback and suggestions. In Bella's case, this notion dampened her motivation, leading to procrastination in her thesis writing process. Meanwhile, for Anna, the delay in her advisor's responses had resulted in confusion and forgetfulness about her thesis content, which eventually impeded her thesis writing progress. These findings were illustrated in the interview excerpts below.

"... I feel nervous to contact my lecturer (thesis advisor) ... worried about their response and feedback ... There were times when I was highly motivated to work on my thesis, but my lecturer was not as responsive ..." (Bella, February 20, 2024)

"... Indeed, sometimes I feel reluctant to contact my lecturer (thesis advisor) ... they always delay in responding to my chat ... so I sometimes forget about the content of my thesis and how to continue it ... I'm confused with their feedback about my writing ..." (Anna, February 20, 2024)

Interestingly, when we inquired whether Clara faces the same problem in her interaction with her thesis advisor, she denied it and told us that her thesis advisors always guided her in her thesis writing progress, as she reported in this interview excerpt.

"... no, I do not have any problem with my lecturer (research advisor) ... fortunately, they (thesis advisors) help me a lot in my thesis ..." (Clara, February 25, 2024)

Effect of thesis procrastination

Furthermore, we aimed to investigate the impact of thesis procrastination on the performance and well-being of EFL undergraduate learners. Clara provided her narration as follows:

"... Honestly, sometimes I feel worthless ... I get so down, thinking things like "Why am I so dumb? Why can't I finish (my) thesis on time?" ... stress, feeling low, and being all over the place emotionally ... affect how I act every day—I become more sensitive, easily upset, and quick to give up. It's like my brain just wants to quit, leave my thesis behind, and call it quits altogether ..." (Clara, February 25, 2024)

According to Clara's story, thesis writing procrastination negatively impacted her emotional well-being. In this regard, Clara's inability to complete her thesis promptly diminished her self-worth, leading to self-criticism and a negative self-image. Further, her thesis's procrastination also heightened her sensitivity, irritability, and tendency to give up easily. This emotional turmoil had led her to contemplate on quitting her thesis writing.

Similarly, Anna also confessed her feelings of discomfort due to the postponement of her thesis. This discomfort encompassed negative feelings such as anxiety, self-doubt, insecurity, fear of failure, anger, and frustration. According to Anna's story, these negative feelings were the consequence of constant inquiries from her family and friends about the progress of her thesis. Additionally, her fear of the negative outcomes on her career development due to her incapability to promptly finish her thesis also exacerbated those feelings, as illustrated in the narration below.

"... It's really difficult having my parents, family, and friends constantly asking about my thesis ... It makes me feel anxious and like I'm not doing enough ... I start to overthink all the reasons why it's (thesis) not finished yet. I know it's irrational, but I can't help it. It's so frustrating and makes me feel like a failure. I'm worried that I won't graduate on time and that it will affect my future career ... It's just so much pressure ..." (Anna, February 21, 2024)

Further, in Bella's case, the external pressure and constant questions about her thesis progress led her to disconnection and social withdrawal. This reflects Bella's desire to escape the pressure and scrutiny associated with her thesis writing process. In this regard, Bella reported;

"... It's gotten to the point where I feel like isolating myself from society. I don't want to see or talk to anyone because all they ask about is my thesis..." (Bella, February 20, 2024)

DISCUSSION

The main objective of this narrative study is to illustrate the multifaceted aspects of thesis writing procrastination experienced by Indonesian undergraduate EFL learners. In light of the factors contributing to Indonesian undergraduate EFL learners' thesis procrastination, this study found that all of the research participants have lower levels of self-regulated learning capability. It is apparent from the way that Anna, Bela, and Clara possess an understanding of the importance of setting goals and planning but fail to complete these plans that there may be a deficiency in their metacognitive capability. Research participants' lack of metacognitive capability, which encompasses the inability to monitor, control, and evaluate their thesis writing progress, greatly affects their writing performance. Consequently, the research participants were unable to achieve the desired writing plans. In this regard, recent academic literature (Teng, 2020) supported this finding by reporting a positive correlation between students' metacognitive ability and their writing performance.

Meanwhile, past research (Teng, 2016) highlighted the crucial roles of metacognitive ability in the process of writing by reporting that learners with a higher level of metacognitive ability would outperform their peers in terms of writing performance. As one of the important elements in self-regulated learning, students' lack of metacognitive ability could lead to self-regulated failure, which possibly results in learners' procrastination (Zimmerman & Risemberg, 1997). For this reason, in order to mitigate self-regulation learning failure and improve students' metacognitive ability, it is

recommended for policymakers, lecturers, and thesis advisors to conduct workshops or training to enhance learners' metacognitive skills (Teng, 2020).

Further, the presence of procrastination habits in their undergraduate years could also be an indicator of a cyclical pattern of delayed academic engagement, which eventually influences Indonesian undergraduate EFL learners' tendency to spend less effort in regulating their behavior, leading to procrastination on thesis writing. In line with these findings, Ziegler and Opdenakker (2018) reported that one of the important elements that significantly contributes to undergraduate students' procrastination tendency is their effortless behavior in regulating their effort to adhere to their academic plans and goals. Further, several prominent scholars (Klassen et al., 2008; Steel, 2007) also argued that failure in self-regulation is one of the main elements that empower learners' academic procrastination. In this regard, Solomon and Rothblum (1984) asserted that poor study habits and inadequate time management skills can contribute to heightening students' academic procrastination levels. For that reason, we suggest that the lecturer or thesis advisor integrate self-regulated learning interventions and foster a supportive learning environment to mitigate thesis writing procrastination.

It has been clearly stated in the findings that the participants are experiencing obstacles during their thesis writing process, such as confusion on how to start writing, how to deliver their ideas, and a lack of insight. Due to the participants' insufficient English language mastery, they failed to express their ideas in their thesis, which is in line with the findings of Wahyuni and Umam (2022). Similarly, Boufeldja and Bouhania (2020) also reported that learners' inadequate academic writing capabilities, critical thinking skills, and research persistence could hinder EFL learners' thesis writing progress. Consequently, Cassandra et al. (2024) suggest the need to improve EFL learners' writing capabilities through various academic initiatives, such as writing workshops and training sessions, to address the aforementioned obstacles and support learners in their thesis writing journey.

Further, distraction was also identified as another significant factor affecting the progress of Indonesian undergraduate EFL learners' thesis writing in this study. The distraction encompasses EFL learners' difficulties in concentrating, particularly in noisy environments and mobile gadget-related distractions, which are currently prevalent among adolescents. Similar to the findings of this study, Hong et al. (2021) reported that smartphones have become one of the most significant factors contributing to students' academic procrastination. Notably, mobile phones not only contribute to distractions but also instigate severe addictive symptoms, resulting in maladaptive cognitions, including distraction-related cognitions. In this case, these cognitive disruptions further exacerbate addictive symptoms and increase the likelihood of chronic procrastination during the thesis writing process.

On the other hand, the participants' challenges in creating a conducive learning environment may be attributed to their limited self-regulated learning capabilities. As self-regulated learners are expected to adapt and establish comfortable and enjoyable learning settings (Zhou & Hiver, 2022), research participants' inability to create such learning environments could indicate a deficit in self-regulated learning strategies. This aligns with the academic procrastination theory, which posits that procrastination may result from inadequate self-regulation skills, including the inability to effectively manage time, set goals, and adjust learning strategies (Steel, 2007).

Furthermore, two other research participants, Anna and Bella, experienced the oscillation of negative emotions leading to anxiety and sadness, which affected their motivation in writing their thesis. These negative emotions arose primarily due to various pressures associated with thesis writing. While some learners reportedly enjoy writing under pressure due to better results (Choi & Moran, 2009), the research participants in this study did not share the same sentiments. Instead, they found thesis writing to be overwhelming, thus failed to experience the same enjoyment and inevitably fell into procrastinating behavior. Research has shown that those negative emotions can cause academic procrastination (Rebetez et al., 2016). This indicates that the participants of this study have unstable self-motivation and struggle to regulate their emotions, resulting in self-regulation failure. In contrast, students who are stable in their self-motivation are more likely to persist through challenging times and can take control of their learning (Wolters, 2003). Therefore, this study suggests that educators

and advisors recognize the emotional challenges students face during thesis writing and provide the necessary support to foster better emotional regulation and sustained motivation.

This study also found that delayed feedback from thesis advisors has a detrimental impact on Indonesian undergraduate EFL learners' motivation and well-being, ultimately contributing to thesis writing procrastination. The findings of this study align with [Boufeldja's and Bouhanian's \(2020\)](#) study, reinforcing the notion that a lack of thesis supervisor support and timely feedback can significantly hinder students' thesis progress. In the context of thesis writing, feedback serves as a guiding mechanism, helping students navigate the complex process and maintain their motivation ([Hattie & Timperley, 2007](#)). When feedback is delayed, students may inevitably experience confusion, uncertainty, and reduced self-efficacy, which can worsen procrastination tendencies.

Concerning the effect of thesis procrastination on Indonesian undergraduate EFL learners' well-being, this study underscores the emotional toll that thesis writing procrastination can have on Indonesian undergraduate EFL learners. In this regard, the research participants in this study experienced various negative emotions such as self-criticism, anxiety, fear, and anger, which commonly stem not only from their difficulties in writing a thesis but also from their procrastinating behavior during thesis writing. Indeed, according to a previous study ([Ermiati et al., 2021](#)), during thesis writing, students are susceptible to various negative emotions such as anxiety, sadness, anger, and depression, leading to various negative outcomes such as social disconnectedness and volatile emotional dysfunction. Further, several prominent scholars ([Lindner et al., 2023](#); [Steel, 2007](#)) reported that academic procrastination is positively associated with negative emotions such as anxiety, depression, and frustration, leading to learners' dropout intention. In the case of the current study, research participants experienced a myriad of emotional distress and self-criticism, leading to thesis procrastination in order to cope with those negative emotions. In this regard, procrastination has long been seen as a short-term method to cope with those negative emotions, yet ultimately worsens the situation ([Solomon & Rothblum, 1984](#)). To break this vicious cycle, it is crucial to promote strategies that help learners stay motivated and committed to their academic goals. One such strategy is teacher-peer feedback, which involves actively working on manageable tasks and seeking support from peers or mentors when facing difficulties in thesis writing ([Prompan & Piamsai, 2024](#)). By doing so, learners can boost their confidence and intrinsic motivation, making them more resilient to the adverse effects of procrastination.

CONCLUSION

This narrative inquiry aims to elucidate the complex nature of academic procrastination in thesis writing among Indonesian undergraduate EFL learners. Based on the findings, it is clearly revealed that EFL learners' deficiency in self-regulated learning significantly contributes to the level of their thesis procrastination. Additionally, the participants' insufficient writing skills, marked by their difficulties in expressing coherent, clear, and concise ideas, serve as another reason for delaying their thesis writing progress. Another crucial factor is the lack of immediate and clear feedback from thesis advisors, which could further exacerbate the problem, causing even more delays in their thesis writing progress. Furthermore, habitual procrastination in thesis writing renders the research participants vulnerable to various negative emotions such as anxiety, anger, frustration, insecurity, and self-criticism. Those negative emotions greatly affect EFL students, resulting in social disconnectedness and reduced motivation to continue working on their thesis.

In light of these findings, this study offers pedagogical implications. First, this study provides valuable insights into factors contributing to EFL students' thesis writing procrastination in English Language teaching. Thus, intervention strategies for tackling thesis writing procrastination, which consist of a comprehensive approach focusing on increasing students' self-regulated learning skills, improving writing proficiency, and ensuring consistent and constructive feedback from thesis advisors, can be developed. Second, as valuable empirical data, this study highlights the importance and significant impact of EFL learners' emotional well-being during thesis writing progress. For this reason, educational institutions should consider integrating counseling services for EFL learners to

tackle anxiety and stress, particularly during critical periods of thesis writing progress. In addition, the thesis writing advisor plays a critical role in EFL learners' thesis writing progress and determines the level of EFL learners' procrastination habits during thesis writing. In this regard, educational institutions should provide intensive training for thesis advisors on effective feedback strategies and how to support students' motivation through their thesis writing journey. Through this training, the advisor can give valuable, constructive feedback to EFL learners that could depress EFL learners' procrastination level during thesis writing. Lastly, based on the findings of this study, thesis advisor feedback frequency and quality determine EFL learners' thesis writing procrastination level. In this case, this study suggests that future studies investigate the role of feedback on EFL learners' self-regulated learning capability during thesis writing.

While this study offers valuable insights and implications for addressing thesis writing procrastination among Indonesian undergraduate EFL learners, it is essential to acknowledge the limitations presented in this study. First, this study only collected the data using semi-structured interview as the primary data collection method. Although interviews are valuable for exploring individual insights, it is necessary to mine multiple sources of data in order to triangulate the findings and document the complexity of this issue. For this case, we propose that future researchers employ multiple data collection methods, such as observation and documents, to capture the full complexity of EFL learners' thesis writing procrastination. Second, this study exclusively focuses its attention on female participants. This highlights the need to explore EFL male learners' experiences in thesis writing procrastination further to gain insight from both genders.

Additionally, while this study has contributed to understanding the factors contributing to thesis writing procrastination, future studies should also investigate and develop intervention strategies to effectively mitigate thesis writing procrastination among EFL learners. Lastly, the specific cultural context of Indonesian EFL learners may limit the applicability of the findings to learners in different cultural or educational settings. This study proposes a future study to explore how cultural factors influence thesis writing procrastination across diverse groups.

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