CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

A thesis as an extended argument that presents original contributions to knowledge based on credible evidence (Evans† et al., 2014). Blair (2016)noted that the terms "thesis" and "dissertation" are often used interchangeably, with no clear distinction between them. This paper explores the situated academic writing processes of three ESL writers as they researched, planned, and wrote three modular assignments over the course of their first academic year on a UK university, undergraduate TESOL programme. Adopting a socio cognitive perspective it focuses on the changing patterns of textual and interpersonal interactions that constituted the informants' processes. Data were collected over the year from day-by-day audio-recorded activity logs and interviews, triangulated with tutorial records and textual material of various kinds (chiefly, outlines, charts, drafts, electronic correspondence). Data were analyzed using qualitative procedures to enable the construction of detailed narratives of developing academic writing processes. The study (a) affirms a view of academic writing as a complex socio-cognitive process implicating a range of textual and interpersonal interactions, and identifies two distinct approaches to the writing of academic texts, both of which may lead to high-quality writing and (b) finds that some novice writers engage in textual interactions which provide information about genre, rhetoric, language and the communities of practice within which they write and that this may be one factor distinguishing more from less successful academic writers (Green, 2013).

Agarwal (2011) emphasized that a thesis is a written record of the candidate's work, serving as evidence of their knowledge and capabilities. Bishop (1947) discussed the historical and etymological origins of the thesis, highlighting its development from a proposition for oral discussion to a reasoned composition or essay. In summary, these papers collectively suggest that a thesis is an extended argument that demonstrates original contributions to knowledge, serves as a major academic accomplishment, and can be used interchangeably with the term "dissertation" in some contexts.

Thesis is a long-form academic research paper or document that is typically written by postgraduate students, often as a requirement for the completion of a master's or doctoral degree.

The purpose of a thesis is to demonstrate a student's ability to conduct original research in their field of study and to contribute new knowledge or insights to that field. Theses can vary in length

and format depending on the specific academic program and discipline. The specific requirements for writing a thesis can vary widely depending on the academic institution, the degree level (master's or doctoral), and the field of study. However, there are some common elements that postgraduate students are generally expected to meet.

Original Research: A thesis should be based on original research or a significant contribution to the existing body of knowledge in the field; Length: The length of a thesis can vary, but it is usually a substantial document, often ranging from 50 to 200 pages or more, depending on the level of the degree and the discipline; Citations and References: Students are expected to provide appropriate citations and references to acknowledge and support their work, using a recognized citation style (e.g., APA, MLA, Chicago, etc.); Quality Writing: A well-written thesis should be clear, concise, and free from grammatical and spelling errors. It should be organized logically and follow the conventions of academic writing; Committee and Defense (for doctoral theses): Doctoral students often have to defend their thesis in front of a committee of faculty members. This oral defense is an opportunity to discuss and defend the research and its findings. Postgraduate students should consult their academic advisors, department guidelines, and the specific requirements of their institution to ensure they meet the necessary criteria for writing and submitting their thesis.

The challenges and strategies associated with thesis writing are not unique to any specific country or region; they are global in nature, impacting postgraduate education worldwide. Wagener, B. (2018) writing a master's thesis requires not only technical and methodological skills, but also self-regulation of both cognition and affects, as well as a good relationship with the supervisor, according to the collected answers from students who recently completed their thesis.

Engebretson, Et al (2008) stated that in Australia, the traditional notion of 'good' supervision as a private contract between supervisor and student, and claims that in this new climate 'good' supervision can be defined in specific ways, as one critical component in a whole research curriculum.

Thesis supervision is a multifaceted process that involves a collaborative relationship between students and their academic mentors, aiming to guide and support students in their research endeavors. The quality of this supervision can significantly impact the overall experience and success of postgraduate students. Despite its undeniable importance, there is a paucity of comprehensive research that investigates the challenges faced by Indonesian postgraduate students during thesis supervision and the strategies they employ to overcome these challenges.

Indonesia's higher education landscape has been undergoing transformative changes in recent years, marked by an increasing emphasis on research and academic excellence. With a growing number of Indonesian students pursuing postgraduate studies both domestically and internationally, there is an urgent need to address the intricacies of thesis supervision. The challenges encountered by students and the strategies they employ to navigate these challenges have significant implications for the quality of postgraduate education in the country.

The researcher looked at the gap of challenges and strategies in thesis writing among Indonesian postgraduate students, specifically focusing on how it applies to students in Indonesia. They found this gap based on previous research by Bitchener&Basturkmen (2006), who saw that students didn't fully understand how to structure their writing compared to their supervisors. Hajar & Mhamed (2021) found issues with communication between supervisors and students due to differences in culture and language. Some students preferred a hands-off approach from their supervisors, while others wanted more guidance on things like time management and dealing with feelings of being a fraud.

Lindsay (2015) said that students' natural behaviors and how their supervisors supported them were crucial in thesis writing. They suggested students write continuously to finish their Ph.D. on time and learn more. Odena & Burgess (2017) used a special way of looking at how students learn to write academically. They found that students benefit from feedback tailored to them and need to be resilient. Sadeghi & Shirzad Khajepasha (2015) saw that theses often have problems with how they're written and the language used. They said it's important for students to know how to structure their thesis and gave advice on making it better.

Hence, this thesis will delve into the challenges faced by Indonesian postgraduate students during writing their thesis and explore the strategies they employ to overcome these challenges. Through this investigation, the study seeks to contribute to the enhancement of postgraduate education in Indonesia and provide valuable insights for the broader international academic community.

1.2 Research Question

These questions focus on the perspectives of both postgraduate students and their thesis supervisors. It aims to uncover how their experiences and perceptions impact the quality of thesis supervision and seeks to provide recommendations for enhancing the supervision process to benefit postgraduate education in Indonesia.

These research questions address the core issues of challenges, strategies, and the overall quality of thesis supervision among Indonesian postgraduate students, providing a comprehensive understanding of the topic.

1. What are the challenges faced by Indonesian postgraduate students during the thesis writing process?
2. What strategies do Indonesian postgraduate students employ to overcome the challenges they face in writing thesis?

1.2 The Objectives of the Study

This research carried out by looking at objectivity in the realm of science and good outcomes later, so the researcher would like to present the aims of the research considering of the answer from research questions above, which are as follows:

1. The first objective of this study is to identify and categorize the primary challenges faced by Indonesian postgraduate students during the thesis writing process, and to examine whether these challenges vary significantly across different sight of every postgraduate student.
2. The second purpose is to investigate and document the strategies employed by Indonesian postgraduate students to overcome the challenges encountered during thesis writing, and to evaluate the effectiveness of these strategies in facilitating successful thesis completion.

1.3 The Significances of the Study

The significance of this study can be both practical and theoretical, and it has implications for various stakeholders. Here's a breakdown of its significance from both perspectives:

1.4.1 Theoretical significance:

Academic Research and Literature: This study contributes to the existing body of literature on postgraduate education, particularly in the context of Indonesia. It enriches the academic discussion by adding empirical evidence and insights into the challenges faced by students in the thesis writing process.

Theoretical Frameworks: The study may lead to the development or refinement of theoretical frameworks that explain the challenges faced by postgraduate students in thesis writing. This can be a valuable contribution to the field of educational research and theory.

1.4.2 Methodological Significance:

Research methodology improvement: The study itself contributes to the methodological knowledge in the field of education and academic writing. It provides a case study that could be used as a basis for similar research in different contexts, contributing to a broader understanding of challenges and strategies in thesis writing.

Generalizable Insights: The methodological approach used in the study can offer insights that are not only relevant to Indonesian postgraduate students but may also have applicability to similar contexts globally. This can contribute to the development of best practices in addressing challenges related to thesis writing.

1.4.3 Pedagogical Significance:

Curriculum Development: Insights from the study can inform curriculum adjustments to better prepare students for the thesis writing process. This may involve integrating specific writing skills, research methodologies, and time management techniques into the postgraduate curriculum.

Teaching Approaches: Understanding the challenges faced by students allows educators to tailor their teaching methods to address specific needs. This can lead to more effective instruction and better learning outcomes.