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EFL thesis writing anxiety: Causes, effects, and coping strategies

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ABSTRACT

This present study explores how thesis writing anxiety causes delay in thesis writing completion along with its coping strategies. It adopted narrative inquiry as the research method. The participant was one former student of English education graduate program at a state university in Central Java, Indonesia. Data were garnered through semi-structured interviews. The data were then analyzed by employing thematic analysis. The results suggest that thesis writing anxiety was caused by family and financial problems, full-time working duties and poor time management, as well as unpleasant administrative staff services. Thesis writing anxiety empirically affected thesis writing completion in terms of thesis writing procrastination as well as lack of confidence and feeling worried of making mistakes. Successful coping strategies include identifying problems and seeking solutions, establishing mutual communication with thesis supervisors and workplace stakeholders, as well as maintaining self-motivation. Practical implications and suggestions for further studies are also discussed.

1. Introduction

Thesis writing is a crucial stage in the completion of English education graduate program. This is the stage where a graduate student explores the studies of the field. It tends to be an individual learning experience in which a student goes through several sequential activities which comprise choosing the topic, making the research proposal, doing the research, and completing the thesis writing. Although there must be one supervisor or more who guide the thesis writing, it does not always run well as expected. There are several problems which may occur in the midst of thesis writing process coming from intrinsic or extrinsic factors that lead to the delay or non-completion of thesis writing (Bakhou & Bouhania, 2020; Essuman, 2020; Ismail & Dorloh, 2020).

The delay or non-completion of thesis writing is such a loss, not only for the student himself but also for the institution, family, and state since it results in the lack of professionals as well as the loss of money, time, and energy. There are several factors that lead to the delay or non-completion of thesis writing such as linguistic, personal, and social challenges (Wu & Buripakdi, 2022). Thesis writing completion is also related to supervisors' performance. Mutual communication between students and supervisors as well as supervisors' research performance contribute to the success of thesis writing completion (Bitchener & Basturkmen, 2006; Nouri et al., 2019).

The discussions about thesis writing are closely related to anxiety in writing which has varied manifestations such as apprehension, pessimistic feeling about writing (Jawas, 2019), avoidance to write, and fear of writing test (Wahyuni & Umam, 2017). Writing anxiety can be defined as a term for one or more feelings, beliefs, or behaviors that make things difficult for an individual to begin, work on, or complete a writing assignment that he or she is cognitively capable (Al-Sawalha & Chow, 2012). There are three sorts of writing anxiety comprising cognitive anxiety, somatic anxiety, and avoidance anxiety. Negative expectation and concern about other people's views are categorized as cognitive anxiety. Furthermore, somatic anxiety pertains to one's perceptions of the psychological symptoms of anxiety including nervousness and tension whereas avoidance anxiety denotes students' avoidance of writing (Cheng, 2004).

Several studies which focus on thesis writing anxiety experienced by English as a foreign language (EFL) students have been growing. Wu and Buripakdi (2022) investigated EFL postgraduate thesis writing in a non-native English-speaking context. This study highlighted linguistic problems, ignorance of the institutions, and tension in communication with supervisors as some challenges faced by students. Despite the challenges and emotional ups and downs along the journey, graduate students learned how to handle the writing practice and fought for the desired acceptance as newly emergent members in academia. Furthermore, Ballena and Liwag (2019) explored different experiences and challenges that graduate students encountered in their thesis writing. This study addressed good academic preparation, genuine community support, and personal motivation, be it intrinsic or extrinsic, which served as indispensable bludgeons in thesis writers' challenging journey towards the completion of their thesis writing. Bitchener and Basturkmen (2006) also found out that inadequate language proficiency and students' limited understandings on the function and the nature of thesis writing sections as well as sources of their difficulties became the challenges in thesis writing completion.

In Indonesian context, studies on thesis writing anxiety are still scarce. Mostly, studies about writing anxiety were carried out by employing quantitative research methods which resulted in the levels, types, and causes of writing anxiety; these previous studies typically addressed regular writing activities (Kusumaningputri et al., 2018; Nugroho & Ena, 2021; Syarifudin, 2020; Wahyuni et al., 2019; Wahyuni & Umam, 2017). Findings and elaborations regarding the causes of thesis writing anxiety, its effects on thesis writing, and its coping strategies have remained under-investigated. Albeit quantitative findings on writing anxiety have been much presented, qualitative findings on this topic are still indispensable. Both types of findings complement each other to provide insightful recommendations for graduate students, thesis supervisors, and graduate program stakeholders to deal with this issue.

To fill this void, this present study attempts to explore how thesis writing anxiety causes delay in thesis writing completion along with its coping strategies. Drawing on narrative inquiry as one of qualitative research methods, this study contributes to the realm of English language teaching (ELT), especially thesis writing anxiety and other closely related topics such as teacher professional development, teacher education, and graduate study. This study also generates fruitful implications and insightful recommendations for graduate students, thesis supervisors, and graduate program stakeholders to optimally encounter this urgent issue. Therefore, this study is led by the following research questions:

1) What are the causes of thesis writing anxiety?

2) How does thesis writing anxiety affect thesis writing process?

3) How does the participant cope with thesis writing anxiety?

2.   Method

In light of the spirit of this present study which was to depict the stories of a former graduate student regarding her lived experiences in dealing with thesis writing anxiety, this present study adopted narrative inquiry which belongs to qualitative research methods. Narrative inquiry was first introduced in 1990 by two Canadian researchers named Connelly and Clandinin to define a new approach to teacher education which focuses on personal narratives (Abrar, 2019; Mertova & Webster, 2020). Connelly and Clandinin (1990) asserted that students, teachers, and researchers are storytellers and figures in their own and other people's stories; thus, education and educational research require the construction and reconstruction of individual and societal narratives. In the field of education, most studies have primarily focused on teacher education, especially how teachers' narratives develop and influence their practices (Bell, 2002). Teachers usually tend to tell about their professional development and practices (Barkhuizen, 2014). Furthermore, narrative inquiry incorporates storytelling and research simultaneously by employing stories as research data or utilizing storytelling as a tool for data analysis or results presentation. Narrative inquiry becomes a general notion for story-based research (Barkhuizen et al., 2014). Narrative inquiry is defined as a study in which stories or narratives play pivotal roles (Benson, 2014).

The participant of this study was one former student of English education graduate program at a state university in Central Java, Indonesia. In terms of the relationship between the researchers and the participant in narrative inquiry, this study was categorized into a single biographical narrative inquiry since it merely employed one participant and the researchers analyzed the participant's stories instead of their own stories (Barkhuizen, 2014; Barkhuizen et al., 2014). The participant was a female full-time EFL teacher at an international Islamic elementary school in Central Java which was, of course, a private school. She already had seven years teaching experience. She was 30 years old at the time of the study. She obtained a bachelor degree in English education with cum laude predicate from a reputable private university in Central Java in 2013. Subsequently, she was studying in an English education graduate program at a state university in Central Java from the middle of 2014 to the middle of 2018. It seemed that she required four years to graduate from the graduate program albeit the courses were designed for two semesters (one year) and the rest of the study time was merely

for thesis writing which could ideally be accomplished in one or two semesters. Unfortunately, she experienced a serious problem during her thesis writing. She encountered thesis writing anxiety which hindered and delayed her thesis writing completion until six semesters (three years) since she had begun the initial process of her thesis writing in the third semester and finally accomplished the thesis writing in the eighth semester. Throughout this study, she was called as Miss Lisa (a pseudonym) due to ethical concerns. Miss Lisa had also agreed with the informed consent prior to this study. Overall, this study adhered to educational research ethical guidelines.

This study was a kind of oral accounts in narrative inquiry (McAlpine, 2016). In this study, data were garnered through semi-structured interviews. We utilized interview guides to direct the semi-structured interviews although the questions were typically open-ended to enable the participant to elucidate and the researchers to explore developing themes. Interviews are commonly employed in narrative inquiry to obtain oral accounts of language learning and teaching experiences. The interviews carried out in this study were considered as short stories since they referred to specific events (Barkhuizen et al., 2014). We developed interview guides based on the research questions. The interviews were done in three sessions. Each interview session lasted about one hour. The interviews were audio-taped and transcribed for data analysis. To ensure data quality, maintain research ethics, and empower the participant by giving her authority over what was written, the interview transcripts were submitted to the participant for review, allowing her to revise, add, or delete data (Mero-Jaffe, 2011; Rowlands, 2021). The narrative data were subsequently analyzed by employing thematic analysis which involved coding and categorizing excerpts and organizing them within thematic headings (Benson, 2014). The data were analyzed by both researchers in different times and places to ensure the trustworthiness of the results. Subsequently, several rounds of discussion were done to reach mutually acceptable results.

3.   Results and discussion

This section presents the findings of the present study based on three emerging themes comprising: 1) the causes of thesis writing anxiety; 2) the effects of thesis writing anxiety on thesis writing process; and 3) coping strategies to deal with thesis writing anxiety. This present study results are then critically evaluated and/or compared to previous relevant studies or existing pertinent theories. New findings are also highlighted. Eventually, several implications and recommendations are further suggested.

3.1.   The causes of thesis writing anxiety
Family and financial problems

Several influential factors triggered Miss Lisa to deal with thesis writing anxiety. Some of these factors are categorized as family and financial problems which occurred in the midst of thesis writing process causing thesis writing anxiety and affecting the thesis writing as well. At the same time, these problems also resulted in lower self-esteem as she felt unfortunate, broken, ugly, and unsuccessful.

"There was a problem in my family. We were bankrupt and it also affected my financial condition.... and there was a moment that made me feel scared and worried about going to campus. It was the time when I was late paying the tuition fee and the response from the administrative staff was very unpleasant. If the administrative staff behaved that way just because I was late paying the tuition fee, I thought that my thesis supervisors would treat me worse because I did not go to campus for several weeks." (1st Interview)

Prior studies indicated that family and financial issues tended to be influential factors in thesis writing completion (Essuman, 2020). Actually, both of these factors were somewhat unpredictable. When these problems occurred during the thesis writing, it potentially affected students' readiness and endurance. Parents typically became the main support system for most people and they were considered as a strong motivation for students in accomplishing their studies (Ela, 2020). Problems which occurred to parents and/or family tended to influence students' learning motivation. Furthermore, students' economic hardship negatively impacted their academic performance, mental health, as well as personal and social life (Guan et al., 2015). It becomes a necessity for higher education institutions to monitor the students' thesis writing progress and take quick actions to assist students who currently experience serious problems which affect their thesis writing. Thesis supervisors should also build effective communication with their students. These actions can be implemented in accordance with the rules and regulations in each higher education institution.

Full-time working duties and poor time management

Miss Lisa worked as a full-time EFL teacher at an international Islamic elementary school in the city. She worked from 07.15 a.m. to 03.30 p.m. on Monday until Friday and from 07.15 a.m. to 01.00 p.m. on Saturday. As one of favorite schools in the city, she was very busy all day long with teaching activities and administrative responsibilities as a teacher. Eventually, she missed scheduled consultation sessions for several times since she was unable to manage her duties as a teacher at school and her thesis writing. She also failed to communicate with the principal of the school where she worked regarding her financial and family problems as well as her thesis writing progress as reflected in the following statement.

"... full-day work from 07.15 a.m. to 03.30 p.m. and you know that the consultation sessions were in working hours too. I missed several consultation sessions. When it occurred, I could not think clearly of what I should do, but now I understand that it was just because I did not communicate well with the principal of the school where I worked regarding my thesis and the requirement of my study." (1st Interview)

Many students were working while pursuing their master degree. As long as there was a clear cut between these two activities, especially in terms of time management, both could run well. In thesis writing which is a kind of self-regulated learning activities, academic time management was a prominent aspect (Wolters et al., 2017). Nevertheless, the time management was not easy to do,

especially amidst the thesis writing since students had their own schedules, research interests, and different progresses. Throughout the research and thesis writing process, some students might have to go back to their working positions and it affected their thesis writing progress if they could not manage both their works and thesis writing (Wu & Buripakdi, 2022). Without a strong determination, measured target, and clear timing, this circumstance potentially resulted in the delay or non-completion of thesis writing. It was also suggested in a previous study that students with full-time employment should seek proper study leave to allow themselves to dedicate the required time for research and thesis writing (Essuman, 2020).

Unpleasant administrative staff services

In addition to family, financial, and work-related problems, there was another hindrance which was related to administrative staff services. Administrative staffs played essential roles to support the success of teaching and learning in higher education institutions and provide administrative services from new students enrollment to graduation ceremony. Effective communication between students and administrative staffs contributed to the students' success in accomplishing their education program and it was the responsibility of both interacting parties (Volet & Tan Quigley, 1999). Administrative staffs' perceptions on their roles also determined their performances in delivering their services (Pitman, 2000).

Each higher education institution has implemented its administration system. This system facilitates both lecturers and students to deal with academic administration. Nevertheless, several students might have a problem as experienced by Miss Lisa who was late paying the tuition fee. Unexpected bad responses from the administrative staff had exacerbated her thesis writing anxiety. Not only was she afraid to meet the administrative staff but also her thesis supervisors. She was afraid of getting bad responses from her thesis supervisors since she had skipped several consultation sessions as reflected in the following statement.

> *"After those unpleasant administrative services, I did not dare to go to campus. If the administrative staff treated me that way, how about my thesis supervisors? I did not go to campus for several weeks and assumed that their responses would definitely be worse than the administrative staff's responses. Finally, my thesis writing was postponed for three months. Later, at that time, there were a lot of activities at the school so that my thesis writing was postponed again until the end of the semester. I felt uncomfortable going to campus and I used to try to avoid this feeling. You know, it eventually came into a new semester and I had to pay the tuition fee again."* (2nd Interview)

In this complicated circumstance, she was unable to manage and communicate her problems with relevant stakeholders. She did not attempt to communicate her problems with her thesis supervisors and the principal of the school. Thus, her condition got worse and she had no assistance from others. She did nothing regarding her thesis writing. Some solutions should have been identified. For example, she could take a leave for one semester while trying to deal with all her problems. Unfortunately, her thesis writing anxiety was unrecognized since she did not really know what happened to her.

3.2. The effects of thesis writing anxiety on thesis writing process

Thesis writing procrastination

First, she began to recognize her thesis writing anxiety when she was afraid of getting unpleasant responses from her thesis supervisors. It was previously triggered by unpleasant responses from the administrative staff. At that time, she had previously done the preliminary study, seminar of research proposal, and data collection. She had also completed a bit of chapter 4 which consisted of research findings and discussions. Nevertheless, after one consultation session on chapter 4, she stopped and never did the revision for many months. It is evident in the following statement.

"Because something bad happened, I avoided going to campus and doing thesis writing. I had collected the data and conducted the interviews. I had written a draft as well, but I always avoided to open it again and make revisions. For more than six months, I used to sleep after Isya' prayer. It was really not productive. I was not lazy; I only did not want to see it. I did not want to open my laptop. It was very uncomfortable. I did not want to meet my thesis supervisors." (3rd Interview)

At that time, she neither opened nor revised her thesis draft based on the supervisors' feedback. She used to sleep right after finishing her daily routines at around 07.00 p.m. It was triggered by her anxiety of receiving unpleasant responses from her thesis supervisors since she had missed several consultation sessions. Anxiety commonly caused procrastination or intentional delay and avoidance of due task which negatively impacted learning, achievement, academic self-efficacy, and quality of life (Rabin et al., 2011). A previous study also reported that this behavior increased dropout rates and decreased graduation rates (Arnold, 2022).

Lack of confidence and feeling worried of making mistakes

Pauses from academic activities which she experienced for months, in fact, decreased her confidence to accomplish the thesis writing. She required longer time to think about what she should write and how to elaborate her ideas into writing. She was also not confident with the quality of her writing.

"Yes, it had been one semester and I did not open my thesis draft at all. When I wanted to start the thesis writing again, there was confusion where I should start from and how I should begin. Besides, there were other problems including fear of wrong grammar such as missing the articles and using inappropriate vocabulary. I felt worried that my writing would not be clear and easily understood by my supervisors." (3rd Interview)

When she was getting along with her teaching activities at school, she was unaware of the length of pauses that she experienced. The only thing which made her aware of her long pauses was the notification to pay the tuition fee for the following semester. She did not predict that long pauses in thesis writing would have longitudinal effects. These pauses did not only cause the delay of thesis writing completion but also diminished the sense of thesis writing. These pauses also decreased her confidence in the quality of her writing.

"I was afraid of being scolded if I wrote something wrong grammatically or used inappropriate vocabulary. There was a friend of mine whose writing was considered as not really satisfying by my thesis supervisors. I thought that it might also happen to me if I made mistakes in my thesis draft." (3rd Interview)

She still did not start the thesis writing since she had been worried about possible negative feedback from her thesis supervisors. It was caused by insufficient writing activities during the long pauses. These hindrances along with linguistic difficulties, lower self-confidence, and time pressure, in fact, commonly resulted in writing anxiety for EFL learners (Rabadi & Rabadi, 2020; Wahyuni & Umam, 2017). Another study also revealed that students with writing anxiety tended to perform poorly in writing (Park, 2020), such as in terms of language accuracy and creative writing performance (Wang, 2021). Lower self-confidence and students' beliefs were also the limiting factors in academic writing (Zotzmann & Sheldrake, 2021). What happened to Miss Lisa was the results of long pauses which caused lack of writing practices due to her anxiety of getting negative feedback from her thesis supervisors. In fact, her writing was good since she finally got A- for her thesis.

"In fact, my writing was okay since I got A- for my thesis. That was a good score I thought. There were only few corrections on my final thesis draft. Throughout the consultation sessions, there were also not many revisions regarding grammar or something else. I just felt worried about what might happen in the future while everything was actually okay." (2nd Interview)

When she was aware of her thesis writing anxiety and dealt with it, she took some steps to overcome these aforementioned problems and finally completed her thesis writing. Although it took a long process and involved many people, she was eventually able to complete her thesis writing.

3.3. Coping strategies to deal with thesis writing anxiety
Identifying problems and seeking solutions

Friends and/or fellow students were such a great support system in thesis writing. Although the students might have different research topics and interests, they could still discuss and give peer-feedback to each other. Having fellow friends could maintain the rhythm in thesis writing since the students could motivate and help each other in accomplishing the thesis writing. This kind of moral support had valuable impacts on the students' learning and helped them to accomplish their studies on time (Ismail & Dorloh, 2020).

At first, Miss Lisa did not realize what happened to her until one of her friends talked to her about the change in her attitude. Her friend who had known her since undergraduate study recognized the change in her learning attitude. Miss Lisa had been previously very passionate to learn and highly motivated in her activities. Nevertheless, she subsequently became afraid of all things related to her graduate study and avoided to talk about her thesis writing.

"My friend recognized the change in my learning attitude. I was not a student who had cognitive problems. However, how could I become very afraid of going to campus although I could not see my

campus gate at the moment? It was really annoying. Later, my friend invited me to talk and describe my feelings. She was from a Psychology department and she suggested me to see a psychologist. That was the first time when I met a psychologist." (2nd Interview)

It became the very first step which she took to deal with her thesis writing anxiety. It was effective enough to bring her back to the thesis writing. Unfortunately, she later had several illnesses for a few months which eventually led her to see a psychiatrist.

"I went to the clinic every month with nausea and I got almost the same medicine. I was then referred to an internist but he said that everything was okay. Later, the doctor in the clinic referred me to a psychiatrist with a psychosomatic diagnosis. At the moment, I got some medicine and vitamin B so that I would not frequently get dizzy. Then, I could sleep well at night. I regularly attended counselling sessions with the psychiatrist and it really helped me a lot. I could recognize what happened to myself and how I could accept my condition. Finally, I got back my motivation to complete my thesis writing as soon as possible." (2nd Interview)

Talking to friends not only helped Miss Lisa to recognize her thesis writing anxiety but also aided her cope with her feelings of insecurity about her writing skill. Once she had come back to her thesis writing, she talked to some friends in the same department to ask the strategies for writing chapter 4 and chapter 5 which consisted of results, discussion, conclusion, and suggestion.

"Sometimes, I asked my friends including my juniors in the same department who had completed their thesis writing. I asked how to write chapter 4 and chapter 5 and they were very welcome. I previously thought that I was alone. However, I had many good friends in fact. I texted them and they kindly answered my messages. I then asked more about the strategies or techniques to complete the thesis writing and they elaborated the strategies to me. It was so helpful." (2nd Interview)

Furthermore, she asked one of her friends to help her by giving comments and feedback on her thesis draft since she was really afraid of making mistakes.

"In another occasion, I had asked one of my friends to read my thesis draft before I met my supervisors. She said that my writing was okay and I did not need to worry about it. I felt better and confident enough to meet my thesis supervisors afterwards." (3rd Interview)

Previously, Miss Lisa did not talk about her problems to anyone including her classmates and colleagues. She thought that all her friends were busy with their own thesis writing projects and jobs. Nevertheless, it was on the contrary. Her friends were very welcome and pleased to help her when she talked to them. The comments and feedback from one of her friends also meant a lot to her and restored her confidence to write. It was revealed that both direct and indirect feedback was essential in writing and brought positive impacts on students' progress (Bailey, 2019) and face-to-face discussions tended to be more preferable (Ismail & Dorloh, 2020). Asking one of her friends to review her thesis draft and provide comments and feedback on it was also a brilliant idea since Miss Lisa had had

long pauses from academic activities before. This had been done before she met her thesis supervisors. These face-to-face discussions with one of her friends impacted positively on her confidence to write her thesis draft. It also made her felt better and well-prepared.

Establishing mutual communication with thesis supervisors and workplace stakeholders

Miss Lisa admitted her failure in establishing mutual communication with her thesis supervisors and the principal of the school where she worked regarding her thesis writing project. At first, she decided not to tell her problems to others and perceived that her work performance at school should not be interfered. Evidently, the majority of communication in workplaces was task-related compared to relationship-related communication whereas communication played a pivotal role in promoting workers' well-beings (Newnam & Goode, 2019).

When she had already come back to the thesis writing, she finally talked to her thesis supervisors about her duties at school and communicated with the principal of the school regarding her thesis writing which had been delayed for months. At this stage, Miss Lisa also received the warning letter from the university regarding her study completion deadline. In fact, it motivated her even more and built up her determination to accomplish her thesis writing. She was finally allowed to take two months off from the workplace to focus on completing her thesis writing.

> *"First, I communicated with the principal of the school. The school then made special schedules for me so that I could go to campus for having consultation sessions. However, it was not enough. Finally, the school gave me two months off from works to complete my thesis writing project."* (2nd Interview)

Subsequently, she also talked to her thesis supervisors and got good responses.

> *"I met my thesis supervisors and it was totally different from what I had imagined before. After long pauses and all things that happened to me, I realized that all my supervisors cared about me, maybe, in a different way. When I had problems with my thesis writing, I should consult with my thesis supervisors but I had avoided it. Whatever the condition is, a graduate student should not leave consultation sessions with thesis supervisors since it is very essential."* (2nd Interview)

Establishing mutual communication with both the thesis supervisors and the principal of the school resulted in some valuable solutions for Miss Lisa such as having two months off from the workplace to complete her thesis writing. Effective communication helped to deal with writing anxiety (Wu & Buripakdi, 2022). Interpersonal relationship between students and thesis supervisors was also essential to help students in completing their thesis writing (Ismail & Dorloh, 2020). Therefore, students should not consider thesis supervisors as judges who gave final judgement to their thesis draft, but as mentors who provided comments, feedback, and suggestions for the enhancement of the thesis writing. Students should also consult with their thesis supervisors when they encountered any problem or difficulty regarding their thesis writing. The relationship between students and thesis supervisors was like a team in an organizational setting (Gunasekera et al., 2021).

Maintaining self-motivation

Another emerging strategy was maintaining self-motivation. To accomplish the thesis writing, self-motivation was very crucial. Miss Lisa would not succeed to accomplish her thesis writing unless she got her self-motivation back and attempted to maintain her self-motivation high. Self-motivation positively affected learning engagement and eventually enhanced students' creativity (Wang et al., 2022) as thesis writing was characterized as an ultimate self-regulated learning activity (Sachs, 2002).

It was true that support systems including good friends and colleagues were important to motivate and support Miss Lisa in accomplishing her thesis writing as well. Nevertheless, self-motivation which internally came from Miss Lisa herself was more crucial than motivation which came externally. It was evidenced by the following excerpt.

"I remembered a quote which asserted that the one who could solve this was yourself. Later, I took two months off from the school where I worked. I had spent lots of money and my family really wanted to see me at the graduation ceremony. After I had attended the counselling sessions and taken medicines routinely, I felt better. I felt more relaxed when I was undergoing hindrances. I was also more comfortable and confident to write my thesis draft. Moreover, I was not afraid of whatever which would happen in the future." (1st Interview)

To maintain her self-motivation high, Miss Lisa did environmental structuring, goal-oriented self-talk, and self-handicapping (Diasti & Mbato, 2020). By environmental structuring, Miss Lisa sought comfortable places to write her thesis draft, either in her own room or other places such as café, library, and open space depending on her mood. She also organized her room to be more comfortable. She took a break whenever she should do. Furthermore, goal-oriented self-talk worked well since she used to keep in mind the strong reason to accomplish her thesis writing. She wanted to make her parents proud of her and avoided spending more money for the tuition fee. After all, she should finish what she had started before. Ultimately, self-handicapping denoted eluding hindrances which occurred before or during the completion of thesis writing by not procrastinating.

4. Conclusion

Thesis writing anxiety experienced by Miss Lisa was the result of both predicted and unpredicted causes. The predicted cause was her need to manage both working and thesis writing activities. She failed to manage and communicate her working duties and thesis writing activities to the principal of the school and her thesis supervisors. The unpredicted causes were family and financial problems along with unpleasant services from the administrative staff which occurred during the thesis writing process. Both types of causes eventually resulted in long pauses in the thesis writing since Miss Lisa avoided thesis writing activities and felt anxious of getting unpleasant responses from her thesis supervisors. Consequently, she was procrastinating on her thesis writing. She also lacked of confidence with her writing skill and felt worried of making mistakes after the long pauses from thesis writing activities. Fortunately, she was aided by one of her friends to recognize her problems which

encouraged her to seek solutions. She went to a psychologist and a psychiatrist to cope with her thesis writing anxiety. Furthermore, she talked and discussed with her colleagues regarding thesis writing strategies. She had also requested help from one of her friends to review and give feedback on her thesis draft before it was submitted to her thesis supervisors. She initiated more effective communication with her thesis supervisors and the principal of the school. Eventually, she got back her self-motivation to accomplish her thesis writing and attempted to maintain her self-motivation high. Her strategies to cope with her thesis writing anxiety were really successful.

This present study generates several fruitful implications and suggestions for further studies. English education graduate students should be well-prepared for thesis writing since it does not only demand knowledge and skills but also psychological endurance throughout the process. Having good physical and mental health becomes a primary need to accomplish the thesis writing project. In addition, thesis supervisors and the head of study program should regularly monitor and evaluate students' thesis writing progress periodically. It will be very helpful to identify the students who currently encounter problems in accomplishing the thesis writing and to provide solutions as well as assistance to them. Both students and thesis supervisors are suggested to build and maintain mutual communication to keep the thesis writing progress on the right track. Students who have been working should also establish mutual communication with their workplace stakeholders. Students are also recommended to discuss with their colleagues regarding thesis writing strategies and other closely related topics to the thesis writing.

Aside from its advantages, this study still has several drawbacks. It only employed a very small number of participant (one participant) which cannot be generalized in its context. In other words, it does not represent general results in its context or other contexts. Further studies are encouraged to engage more participants to explore more varied and generalizable results. Different research methods in both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies are still welcome to investigate this phenomenon from various perspectives. Ultimately, different contexts are also worthy for investigations including thesis writing anxiety experienced by undergraduate and doctoral students or academic writing anxiety encountered by lecturers, tertiary teachers, researchers, and other types of jobs which are related to academic writing and research. Similar phenomena may occur in other institutions and involve many factors. Therefore, further studies on thesis writing anxiety can be carried out in different settings as well.

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