Diagnosis of Student's Anxiety on Undergraduate Thesis Writing at Raden Wijaya State Buddhist College

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Abstract

This research aims to measure the level of anxiety and analyze the factors that cause student anxiety in writing their thesis. The research was conducted using descriptive quantitative research at the Raden Wijaya State Buddhist College, Wonogiri, Central Java. The sample for this research consisted of 55 students in semester VII of the 2023/2024 academic year. The instruments used were Zung's Self-Rating Anxiety Scale and questionnaires. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The research results show that students' anxiety level in writing their thesis is in the medium category, with an average score of 40.8. Factors that cause student anxiety include lack of understanding of research methodology, difficulty finding references, fear of failure and disappointing parents, and worry about the thesis trial.

Keywords: writing anxiety, college student, undergraduate thesis writing

INTRODUCTION

A thesis is a final assignment in the form of writing a scientific work that must be completed by students at the undergraduate level as a condition for obtaining a bachelor's degree. The thesis is an integral part of the higher education process. It shows a student's ability to apply the knowledge and skills acquired during their study period in the form of research or in-depth study on a particular topic according to the field of study pursued by the student. The thesis is proof of the student's integrity in implementing the knowledge they have acquired in higher education (Wakhyudin & Putri, 2020). Writing a thesis aims to explore and solve scientific problems in the student's field of study (Ramdhan, 2021). Students must understand the theory, choose appropriate research methods, and master scientific writing skills to produce quality theses that are useful for the wider community.

The problems faced by students in preparing their theses are very diverse. Cost issues, difficulty in determining the title of the thesis, uncertainty about choosing research, facing supervisors, fear of receiving criticism and questions from examiners, and a large number of revisions are a mental burden for students (Risfia et al., 2022). If students cannot adapt to these difficulties, they will easily experience stress, frustration, and loss of motivation (Cahyani & Akmal, 2017). This can result in failure to complete the thesis, extending the study period or even failing to complete the study.

Measuring students' anxiety levels in writing their theses has been carried out by several researchers using the State Anxiety Inventory (Diah et al., 2020), Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale (Dekawaty, 2021; Hastuti et al., 2016), Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (Fikry & Khairani, 2017), and anxiety scales (Fachrozie et al., 2021; Habibullah et al., 2019; Machmudati & Diana, 2017; Widigda & Setyaningrum, 2018). One instrument that has been widely used to measure anxiety levels is Zung's Self-Rating Anxiety Scale (ZSAS). Scale designed by William W.K. This Zung consists of 20 statement items with four answer choices: never, sometimes, often, and always. This scale has been used to measure first-year students' anxiety (Hotijah et al., 2021; Sandjaja et al., 2017; Wahyuni et al., 2020). Researchers are interested in using ZSAS to assess final-year students' anxiety in preparing their theses at the Raden Wijaya Wonogiri State Buddhist College (STABN), Central Java.

Diagnosis of final-year student anxiety in preparing a thesis is necessary as a preventive effort to minimize failure to complete studies. In the 2022/2023 academic year, the graduation rate for STABN Raden Wijaya Wonogiri Central Java students is 90%. 10% of students have not been declared graduated because they have problems completing their thesis. This will undoubtedly hurt the students concerned and also the institution. Therefore, this research is significant in improving the quality of student services and achieving student admission targets.

METHODS

This research was carried out using descriptive quantitative research. The instrument used to measure students' anxiety levels in writing their thesis is Zung's Self-Rating Anxiety Scale. Data relating to student anxiety factors was collected using a questionnaire of 18 statements with the Guttman scale. The population in this study were seventh-semester students of STABN Raden Wijaya Wonogiri, Central Java, in the academic year 2023/2024. The sample in this study was 55 students using a simple random sampling technique. Data were analyzed using univariate analysis or descriptive statistics, namely data analysis techniques for one variable independently without being linked to other variables and aimed at describing the condition of the object or phenomenon being studied.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Univariate Analysis

Respondents were eight semester VII students in the Buddhist Religious Education (PKB) study program, 17 people in Buddhist Communication Science (IKOM), ten people in Buddhist Extension (KB), ten people in Buddhist PGSD, and ten people in Buddhist Tourism (PAR). Ten people. The characteristics of respondents based on gender and study program are presented in Figure 1.
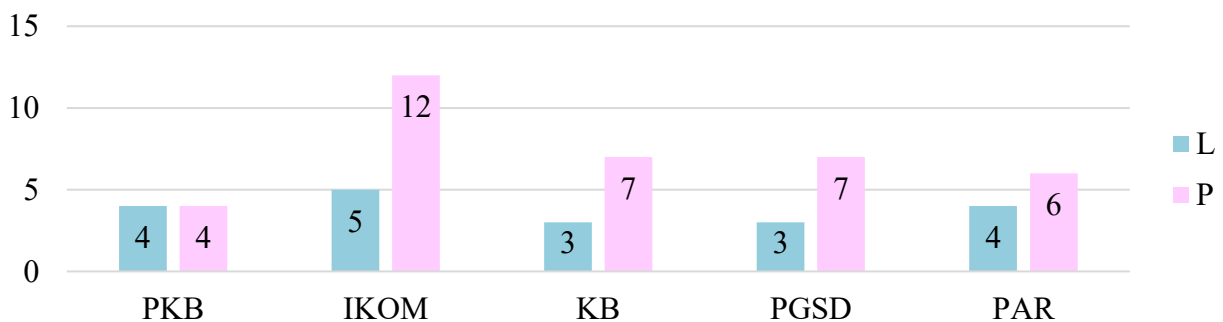

Figure 1. Characteristics of respondents based on gender and study program

The results of measuring the level of anxiety in preparing a thesis for students at STABN Raden Wijaya Wonogiri, Central Java, using Zung's Self-Rating Anxiety Scale, show that the average level of student anxiety is in the medium category (65%). An overview of the results of measuring students' anxiety levels is shown in Table 1. In contrast, the comparison of male and female students' anxiety levels is shown in Figure 2.

Table 1. Student Anxiety Level

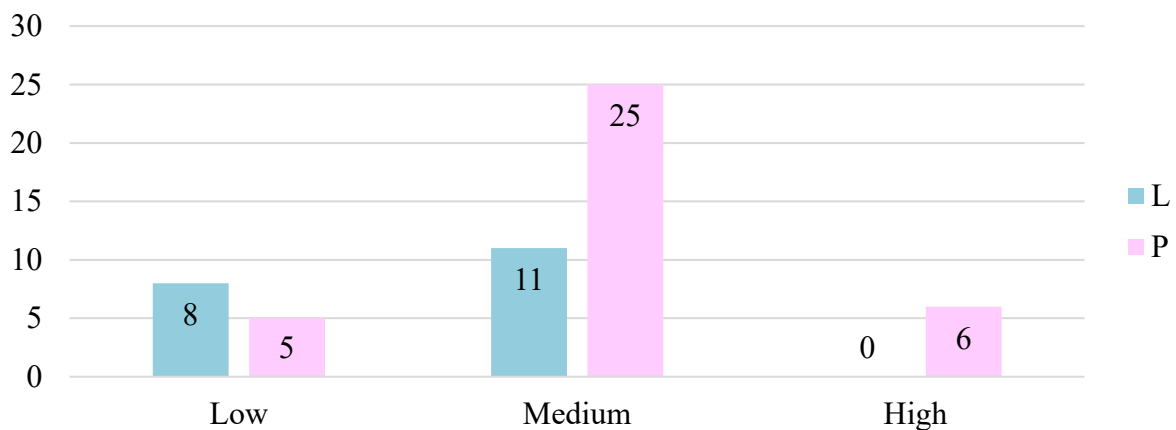| No	Category	Score	f	Percentage
1	Low	20-34	13	24%
2	Medium	35-49	36	65%
3	High	50-64	6	11%
4	Severe	65-80	0	0%

Figure 2. Comparison of anxiety levels of male and female students

The level of student anxiety for each study program is not very different. The results of the data analysis are shown in Figure 3.
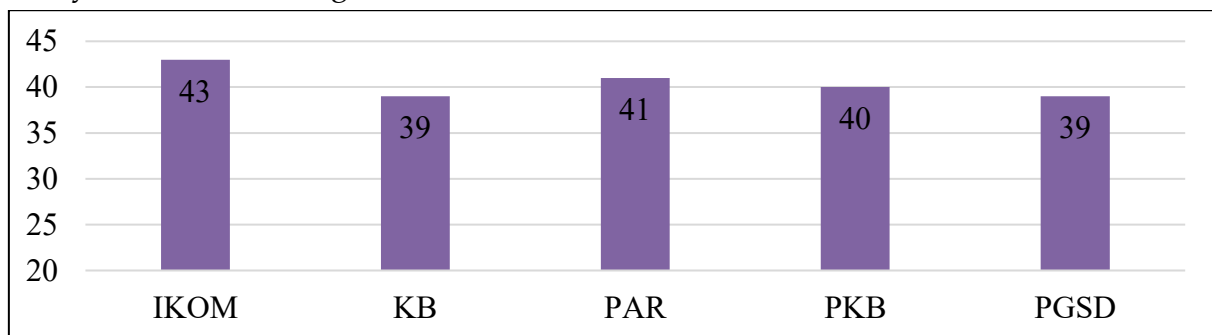

Figure 3. Comparison of student anxiety levels per study program

The factors that cause student anxiety in writing a thesis are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Factors causing student anxiety

No	Factor	Percentage
1	Difficulty writing a thesis title	60%
2	Difficulty meeting the supervisor	22%
3	Difficulty in establishing the background of the problem	67%
4	Difficulty in identifying the problem	56%
5	Difficulty in formulating the problem	49%
6	Difficulty finding references	82%
7	Confusion in determining research methods	47%
8	Confusion in determining data collection techniques	73%

9	Confusion in compiling questionnaires/interview guidelines	84%
10	Confusion in data analysis	89%
11	Confusion in presenting research data	89%
12	Worried about the thesis trial	78%
13	Worried about revisions	64%
14	Worried about research costs	53%
15	Concerned about the adequacy of research time	75%
16	Fear of not finishing on time	84%
17	Fear of not being able to meet the expectations of parents/family	84%
18	Afraid of not passing	80%

Student Anxiety Level in Writing a Thesis

The findings in this research indicate that the anxiety level of STAB Negeri Raden Wijaya students in preparing their thesis can be categorized as moderate. Students often experience physical problems such as dizziness, indigestion, and difficulty sleeping. Students in their final semester will undoubtedly feel anxious when preparing a thesis, which is required for graduation and obtaining a bachelor's degree. Students experience symptoms of anxiety, which are shown by frequently feeling headaches, restlessness, nervousness, and difficulty sleeping when dealing with writing a thesis. This finding is supported by research (Wakhyudin & Putri, 2020), which states that students experience headaches, difficulty sleeping, and feel tired quickly, nervous, restless, hopeless, and even depressed when faced with final assignments.

An interesting finding in this study was that several female students experienced severe anxiety symptoms. They often feel afraid for no apparent reason, their legs and arms usually tremble, and they experience pain in their head, neck, and back. Anxiety levels in male students tend to be lower than in female students. This difference is thought to be due to biological differences between men and women, so that they both have different levels of anxiety. Women have the hormones estrogen and progesterone, which tend to make them vulnerable to stress, thus potentially experiencing anxiety and even depression (Imania et al., 2022). However, there is no significant difference between male and female students in terms of academic anxiety (Aristawati et al., 2020). This is reinforced by the results of the anxiety test, which states that between female and male students, there is no significant difference (Yawa et al., 2021).

Analysis of Factors Causing Student Anxiety in Writing a Thesis

An important finding in this research relates to the factors that cause anxiety among STAB Negeri Raden Wijaya students in preparing their theses, namely that most students are confused about carrying out research. Even though students do not experience difficulty in determining the research title and problem formulation, they are still confused about compiling questionnaires or interview guidelines, analyzing data, and presenting research data. Students do not understand

how to apply the chosen research methodology and process data from questionnaires, observations or interviews. This is supported by (Asmawan, 2016), who stated that students do not understand research methodology because they only copy from upper-level students's theses in the library.

Internal or external difficulties or obstacles can cause anxiety in preparing a thesis. The internal barriers experienced by students in preparing their thesis originate from themselves, such as difficulties in determining the title of the research, formulating problems, designing the contents of the thesis, looking for data or references, as well as difficulties in writing (Wakhyudin & Putri, 2020). Apart from that, students lack confidence in meeting supervisors because they do not have reading sources that can be accounted for when asked questions from supervisors (Zain et al., 2021). External factors that can cause student anxiety are demands from parents that students can immediately complete their studies. Demands not followed by positive support are counterproductive, thereby increasing the mental burden, which results in obstacles to the thesis (Umriana, 2019).

Most students feel anxious because they have difficulty finding references to compile a theoretical basis and relevant research references. Reference provisions required by institutions include books published in the last ten years (minimum 5), journal articles/books by STAB Negeri lecturer Raden Wijaya (minimum 2), reputable national journal articles (minimum 10), and international journal articles (minimum 3) and using the Mendeley reference management application (Darma et al., 2023). The religious studies program students admitted they were confused because of the lack of references related to Buddhist religious theories in their research themes. This is thought to be due to a lack of literacy and efforts to search for literature directly from primary sources, namely the Tripitaka book, which contains Buddhist teachings for forty-five years totalling 84,000 subjects (Maharjan & Ragkhanto, 2022). Apart from that, students' interest in and habit of reading English language literature is still low, so they rarely search for foreign language reference sources (Jumaroh & Aisyah, 2021).

An interesting finding in this research is that supervisors are not a factor causing anxiety for students at STAB Negeri Raden Wijaya. Although several students admitted that there were still difficulties in meeting one of the two supervisors, this did not cause problems because students could still communicate via text messages. This is supported by research results, which state that no relationship exists between supervisors and final-semester students' anxiety levels (Wibowo & Zebua, 2020). The supervising lecturer accompanies students in preparing their thesis, from the preparation of proposals to reports, by directing and optimizing students' potential to produce quality scientific work (Damanik, 2022).

Another factor that causes student anxiety is the fear that if the thesis they are working on is not completed on time, they will not graduate and will be unable to meet their parents' expectations. The effects of fear of failure are high anxiety, pessimism, self-instability, decreased intrinsic motivation, and avoidance of goals (Ningrum & Suprihatin, 2019). This fear should be

transformed into motivation to complete the thesis well and on time, not to disappoint yourself and your parents. When parents have high expectations for their children's performance, children tend to work hard to make their parents proud. Students consider expectations from their parents as encouragement to complete their thesis.

The thesis trial is also a factor that students worry about. Anxiety when facing a thesis trial consists of emotional anxiety (feelings of anxiety, fear, panic, or worry) and cognitive anxiety (impaired concentration and thinking). These anxieties cause physical effects, such as sweaty hands, stomach aches, and a fast heartbeat—excessive anxiety results in a lack of self-confidence during presentations (Waluyo & Rofiah, 2021). Students are worried about the thesis trial process, afraid of getting difficult questions from the examining lecturer, afraid of being unable to answer the questions, worried if a lot of their writing needs to be revised, and worried if the results are not optimal.

This research's limitation is that the sample does not cover all study programs at STABN Raden Wijaya Wonogiri, Central Java. Apart from that, the method used is limited to descriptive studies, and the data analyzed is only based on questionnaire responses without conducting in-depth research through interviews or observations of student behaviour. Therefore, further research is needed to produce more accurate and comprehensive data.

CONCLUSION

The diagnosis of anxiety in preparing a thesis for final semester students at STAB Negeri Raden Wijaya shows that the student's anxiety level is in the medium category. Factors that cause student anxiety in writing a thesis include a lack of understanding of research methodology, difficulty finding references, fear of failure, and worry about the thesis trial. Academic supervisors and thesis supervisors are needed to accompany students in preparing their thesis and motivate them so that students can complete their final assignments well and on time. Anxiety is only felt personally by students, so social support and empathy from parents, peers, and the university environment are needed.

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