ANXIETY OF FINAL STUDENTS WHO HAVE NOT YET STARTED THEIR THESIS IN FACING THE QUESTION 'WHEN WILL THEY GRADUATE?': SELF-EFFICACY ANALYSIS

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Abstract
Final year students often experience academic stress, pressure from family, and increased anxiety when facing the demands of preparing a thesis. This study aims to understand the dynamics of academic anxiety experienced by final year students who have not yet started preparing their thesis, especially when facing social questions about their academic progress. This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design for one subject from the class of 2020 who experienced difficulties in starting a thesis due to academic pressure, family expectations, and negative experiences from others. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, non-participant observations, and document analysis related to the subject's academic behavior. Data analysis was carried out with a thematic approach based on four sources of self-efficacy, according to Bandura. The results showed that the subjects' low self-efficacy was related to a lack of experience of academic success, negative experiences from family members who did not complete their studies, a lack of motivational verbal support, as well as physiological and emotional conditions characterized by excessive anxiety. Social questions like "when to graduate?" serve as anxiety triggers that reinforce patterns of academic avoidance. This study concludes that obstacles in starting a thesis are not only related to time management, but are also influenced by the interaction between psychological factors, family environment, and socio-cultural context. These findings are expected to be the basis for guidance and counseling services in providing interventions to improve the self-efficacy of final year students

Keywords: Academic anxiety, Final student, Thesis, Self-efficacy, Social pressure

Abstrak

Mahasiswa tingkat akhir sering kali mengalami stres akademik, tekanan dari keluarga, serta kecemasan yang meningkat ketika menghadapi tuntutan penyusunan skripsi. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk memahami dinamika kecemasan akademik yang dialami mahasiswa tingkat akhir yang belum memulai penyusunan skripsi, khususnya ketika menghadapi pertanyaan sosial mengenai kemajuan akademiknya. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus terhadap satu subjek dari angkatan 2020 yang mengalami kesulitan dalam memulai skripsi akibat tekanan akademik, harapan keluarga, serta pengalaman negatif dari orang lain. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi nonpartisipan, dan analisis dokumen yang berkaitan dengan perilaku akademik subjek. Analisis data dilakukan dengan pendekatan tematik berdasarkan empat sumber self-efficacy menurut Bandura.

Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa rendahnya self-efficacy subjek berkaitan dengan kurangnya pengalaman keberhasilan akademik, pengalaman negatif dari anggota keluarga yang tidak menyelesaikan studi, kurangnya dukungan verbal yang memotivasi, serta kondisi fisiologis dan emosional yang ditandai dengan kecemasan berlebihan. Pertanyaan sosial seperti "kapan lulus?" berfungsi sebagai pemicu kecemasan yang memperkuat pola penghindaran akademik. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa hambatan dalam memulai skripsi tidak hanya berkaitan dengan manajemen waktu, tetapi juga dipengaruhi oleh interaksi antara faktor psikologis, lingkungan keluarga, dan konteks sosial budaya. Temuan ini diharapkan dapat menjadi dasar bagi layanan bimbingan dan konseling dalam memberikan intervensi untuk meningkatkan self-efficacy mahasiswa tingkat akhir

Kata kunci*: Kecemasan akademik, Mahasiswa akhir, Skripsi, Self-efficacy, Tekanan sosial*

INTRODUCTION

Students at various levels of education often face academic pressures arising from learning demands, assignment loads, and the process of adapting to the campus environment. This pressure can trigger anxiety that has an impact on students' ability to manage academic obligations (Martono et al., 2023; Nabiilah, 2025). In addition, the stress of daily life also reduces emotional stability, affecting students' focus on completing tasks (Siallagan et al., 2024). This anxiety condition can cause excessive worry, emotional tension, and avoidant behavior (ASMARANI, 2021), which if not managed can hinder students' academic achievement (Christy & Soetjiningsih, 2024).

One of the psychological factors that plays a role in dealing with academic pressure is self-efficacy. Bandura explained that self-efficacy is an individual's belief in his or her ability to complete a certain task, which is formed through success experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological and emotional conditions (Fismasari et al., 2025). Academic self-efficacy has a significant impact on student resilience in preparing a thesis, where students who have a high level of self-efficacy tend to be more able to survive and adapt during the process of preparing final projects (Sasferi, 2022). Students with low self-efficacy tend to doubt their abilities, avoid difficult assignments, and are more prone to experiencing academic anxiety (Ode Marwa Samsalwa et al., 2024). This is related to procrastination, which is the tendency to delay completing tasks because they feel incapable of doing so (Barus, 2022). Emotional reactions such as guilt, fear of failure, and tension also worsen students' conditions (Amrizal Naufalda et al., 2023; Saraswati et al., 2021).

In addition to anxiety, final year students are also very vulnerable to prolonged academic stress during the thesis preparation process. Poorly managed academic stress can reduce motivation, interfere with concentration, and encourage academic avoidance behavior. Rossanti & Mudhar, (2025) explains that self-efficacy has a significant negative relationship with academic stress in students, so self-efficacy can be understood as a protective factor that helps students in managing academic stress in a more adaptive way. Low self-directed learning ability and high levels of academic procrastination contribute to increased academic anxiety among students. This situation indicates that the inability

to manage academic demands independently can exacerbate psychological pressure and hinder students' readiness to start preparing their thesis (Khairun Imani & Rozi, 2024).

More specifically, self-efficacy plays an internal factor that helps students cope with academic demands, while social support is an external factor that strengthens that self-confidence (Nabiilah, 2025). The combination of high self-confidence and adequate social support makes a significant contribution to reducing anxiety levels among final year students. (Ismail et al., 2023). High self-efficacy encourages confidence, increases intrinsic interest, and provides academic satisfaction (Fauziyah et al., 2024). In contrast, students with low self-efficacy tend to avoid or procrastinate on the task at hand (Amrizal Naufalda et al., 2023), including the preparation of a thesis which is considered the most difficult academic task at the end of the study (Barus, 2022). This condition shows that self-efficacy has a strong relationship with students' ability to overcome anxiety, manage stress, and maintain motivation in completing their thesis (Hikmah & Alzhura Mufqi, 2025; Ma et al., 2022). Thus, academic self-efficacy can be understood as an individual's belief in his or her ability to carry out academic tasks (Christy & Soetjiningsih, 2024).

Previous research conducted by Lizarte Simón et al., (2024) shows that self-efficacy, anxiety, and psychological well-being have a significant effect on student academic engagement. Through a quantitative approach with structural equation modeling, this study found that anxiety has a negative relationship with academic engagement, while self-efficacy plays a protective factor in the student learning process. These findings confirm that emotional dynamics and self-confidence have a big role in students' academic success.

Meanwhile, research by Sulistyowati et al., (2025) revealed that self-efficacy has a significant relationship with the level of stress experienced by students during the preparation of their final project. Using a correlational quantitative design, this study shows that students with low levels of self-efficacy tend to be more susceptible to academic stress and have difficulty completing their thesis. The findings highlight the importance of self-confidence as a foundation in the face of complex academic demands. Although previous research has elucidated the relationship between self-efficacy, anxiety, and academic stress, most of the research has been quantitative and has not explored students' subjective experiences in depth. The lack of research that specifically explores the experiences of final year students who have not yet started preparing their thesis shows that there is an important research gap. Therefore, this study aims to understand the dynamics of self-efficacy and anxiety through a case study approach, in order to obtain a comprehensive picture of the psychological and social factors that affect students' readiness to start a thesis.

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design to explore the dynamics of self-efficacy and anxiety experienced by final year students who have not yet started the preparation of their thesis. The qualitative approach was chosen because it provides

an opportunity for researchers to explore subjective experiences and meanings constructed by participants in depth (Creswell, 2018). The case study design was applied because the focus of this research is on one subject that experiences a certain phenomenon in a real context (Yin, 2018). The research subjects consisted of students of the class of 2020 who faced obstacles in starting their thesis due to academic pressure, family experiences, and anxiety related to social questions regarding graduation. The research data was obtained through in-depth interviews, non-participant observations, and document analysis relevant to the subject's academic activities, in accordance with qualitative data collection procedures to gain a comprehensive understanding of the subject's condition (Creswell & Poth, 2016).

Data analysis was carried out using a thematic analysis approach to identify patterns of meaning from the data that had been collected. The thematic analysis approach was chosen for its ability to systematically organize data through the process of coding, categorization, and drawing relevant themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The validity of the data is achieved through triangulation techniques by comparing the results of interviews, observations, and documents, as well as conducting member checking on the subjects so that the findings obtained remain accurate and in accordance with real experience. The entire research process is carried out gradually and in-depth to provide a comprehensive picture of the psychological and social factors that affect the low self-efficacy and high anxiety of the subject in starting the preparation of the thesis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study showed that the subject, a student of the class of 2020, experienced complex psychological, emotional, and social obstacles that prevented him from starting the preparation of his thesis even though he had passed the normal study period. Based on in-depth interviews, the subject admitted that he lacked confidence in his academic abilities and for the past four years continued to delay the completion of his thesis. He also stated that he never felt really successful in his academic assignments during college, so he saw the thesis as a task that was far beyond his capabilities. This lack of experience of success formed the belief that he was not capable of completing his thesis, and he considered failure to be normal because he had seen his siblings go through the same thing. Bandura explains that the experience of success is the strongest source of building self-efficacy; When this experience is not there, one's self-confidence will be greatly reduced. This is in line with the findings Amrizal Naufalda et al., (2023) which shows that students without a history of positive academic achievement tend to experience heavy procrastination in the preparation of thesis. Barus, (2022) It also found that low success experiences make students avoid complex academic tasks. In addition, the research Fauziyah et al., 2024) shows that the experience of success has a significant relationship with students' ability to deal with academic anxiety.

The personal experience and experience of the vicarious greatly influence the condition of the subject. He revealed that his siblings' failure to complete their education made him

feel that he would experience the same failure. In addition, he loses social support from his friends; Since his final semester, he rarely interacts with the academic environment. The absence of peers makes him lose role models that can be a source of motivation or an overview of strategies in completing their thesis. Bandura explained that individuals build self-confidence by observing the successes or failures of others. If a person often sees failures from the people closest to them, then his self-efficacy tends to decrease. These findings are supported by Saraswati et al., (2021) which shows that students who see their family members fail in education are more prone to experiencing academic demotivation. Hikmah & Alzhura Mufqi, (2025) It also emphasized that the loss of social support worsens the perception of final year students' self-abilities. Fismasari et al., (2025) found that students who have positive role models show higher self-efficacy in facing final projects. The subject's socially isolated condition makes him unable to have a positive source of comparison that can boost self-confidence.

From the point of view of verbal persuasion, the subject expresses a deep embarrassment for sharing his condition with the parents, which makes him stay away from emotional support. He even lied to his parents several times by saying that his thesis was completed and was just waiting for information about graduation. This act of lying not only indicates the presence of emotional distress, but also indicates that the subject does not receive positive verbal persuasion that could increase his self-efficacy. Bandura emphasizes that verbal persuasion—in the form of encouragement, trust, or belief from others—can strengthen an individual's ability to face challenges. However, when a person feels unsupported or afraid of disappointing those closest to him, his self-efficacy will decrease even more. These findings are in line with research (Ma et al., 2022), which suggests that college students who do not receive verbal support from family are more susceptible to academic stress. Devi et al. (2024) also found that pressure from the family can worsen students' anxiety in the thesis preparation process. On the other hand, research Nuraini et al., (2022) explained that students who do not receive emotional support tend to withdraw from academic activities.

The emotional state of the subject is an important factor that hinders the completion of the thesis. He feels excessive anxiety related to social questions such as "when to gradu?", which is the main trigger for the emergence of shame, fear, and avoidance in academic contexts. The subject also stated that from the beginning he felt that he did not fit in with the chosen major, because the study program taken was the choice of his parents, not his own wishes. This feeling of mismatch led to a loss of intrinsic interest, which had an impact on his motivation and ability to complete his thesis. Bandura explains that an individual's physiological and emotional condition affects the perception of his or her abilities; The worse a person's emotional state, the lower his level of self-efficacy. Research findings ASMARANI, (2021) This supports this, showing that academic anxiety can worsen students' perception of self-ability. Martono et al.,(2023) It also found that anxiety was closely related to avoidance behaviors and decreased academic motivation. Prophet, (2025) emphasized that anxiety that is not managed properly can

hinder the academic decision-making process, including in starting and completing a thesis.

Based on the overall results, it is understandable that the subject's low self-efficacy is not caused by a single factor, but is an interaction of little success experience, negative vicarious experience, lack of positive verbal support, and unstable emotional state. These four aspects support each other and create a circle of psychological obstacles that make the subject continue to delay the preparation of the thesis for many years. This is in line with Bandura's self-efficacy model which states that a person's self-confidence is formed from the complex interaction of various internal and external factors. In this context, the subject's academic experience, family dynamics, emotional state, and social support from the immediate environment all play a role in shaping the subject's decision not to start his thesis.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study indicate that the obstacles in the preparation of theses for students of the class of 2020 who are the object of research are not only caused by academic incompetence, but also by the interaction between mutually supportive personal, social, and emotional factors. Low experience of academic success causes subjects to lose confidence to start their thesis, coupled with negative vicarious experiences in the form of educational failures in the family and lack of support from peers. The absence of positive verbal persuasion from the immediate environment, as well as pressure from the family due to feelings of "wrong major", further worsen the subject's condition of self-efficacy and encourage him to engage in academically evasive behavior, including lying to parents about the progress of his studies. The four sources of self-efficacy, according to Bandura, proved to be very relevant in explaining how the subject's decline in self-confidence directly affected his ability to complete his thesis.

In addition, the anxiety that arises from social pressure in the form of questions about graduation exacerbates the negative emotional state experienced by the subject, so he chooses to stay further away from academic activities and the social environment on campus. The findings of this study show that the completion of the thesis is not only a matter of time management or academic technical ability, but also involves psychological, motivational, family relationships, and the quality of social support received by students. Therefore, guidance and counseling services should consider comprehensive interventions with a focus on strengthening self-efficacy, managing anxiety, improving social support, and facilitating communication with families so that students can rebuild their confidence and be able to complete their final projects optimally.

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