

Pre-Service Teachers' Anxiety on Undergraduate Thesis Process

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ABSTRACT

Undergraduate thesis process means the whole process of the foreign language undergraduate students experiences to construct and defend the undergraduate thesis. The objective of the study is to investigate foreign language undergraduate students' feelings, level of anxiety, and confidence about their undergraduate thesis process. The method employed in this study is survey and interview. The result of the study shows that the majority of the students have high anxiety on defending their undergraduate thesis before the examiners. It is concluded that both examiners and examinees should create a more relaxing and enjoyable atmosphere. It is suggested that the students must prepare both physically and mentally well before defending their undergraduate thesis.

Keywords: *Undergraduate thesis process, level of anxiety, confidence*

1. INTRODUCTION

Writing a final project or undergraduate thesis may become more problematic for the undergraduate students since the students just undergo their first time experience in the process of writing as well as defending their result of their study before the examiners. Ample of problems may emerge during the process of writing their undergraduate thesis such as feeling unmotivated, not confidence, being afraid of the examiners, lack of resources and so on. To tackle such problems, pre-service teachers must prepare their writing well starting from preparing a proposal, observing, collecting the data, analyzing the data and composing it into a sound writing. They must not waste their time for doing nothing, instead searching more resources, theories, or previous studies so that they may have enough references to prove. Such experience has made the students feel even much anxious.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

A number of researchers have defined what anxiety is. MacIntyre (1999) for example has defined anxiety as the worry and negative emotional reaction when using or learning a second or foreign language. Haskin (2003) states that anxiety is a feeling of uneasiness, aggravation, self-doubt, lack of confidence, or fear intricately entwined with self-esteem issues and natural. "ego preserving" worries. Undergraduate

students may encounter a number of problems when dealing with their final project of writing such as being anxious of writing their undergraduate thesis. Such kind of worries may result in negative experience during their study or undergraduate thesis examinations. This is in line with McIntyre (1999) and Horwitz (2010) stated that anxiety can occur when the learners experience negative. Therefore, in the process of writing the undergraduate thesis, the students may also experience high anxiety depending on how much they encounter. In the past decades, a few number of researches have been conducted (Hewitt and Stephenson, 2012; Sparks and Ganschow, 2007)

There are also factors affecting anxiety. Duraku (2016) pointed out that there are two main factors that can influence the anxiety such as academic and stress. Academic factor mostly deals with the academic activity. Erlaur (in Duraku, 2016) states that when one has high pressure to achieve good result in examinations, the result might be negatively influenced his/her academic performance. Whereas the stress factors is connected to learners' psychological, financial, and health problems (see Goodman in Duraku, 2016). In the past few decades, some scholars (Coulombe, 2000; Yan & Horwitz, 2008) also found out that there is a relation between learning the foreign language and their performance which can cause negative result. Only little studies dealing with the anxiety towards thesis or dissertation process (see, McGrath, 2012; Sanford, 1993) in their studies, they found out that the students have high anxiety towards

their dissertation and thesis process. In this study, the writer is interested to conduct a similar study with the aim to find out whether or not the undergraduate students have anxiety towards their undergraduate thesis process.

3. METHOD

This study employed explanatory mixed method design. A set of modified questionnaire and a two-open ended question adopted from Griffin (2008) was distributed through google form. The questionnaire was formed by averaging responses on the Likert Scale for each that is *Strongly Disagree (SD)*, *Disagree (D)*, *Neither Agree Nor Disagree (NAND)*, *Agree (A)*, and *Strongly Agree (SA)*. To support the data, the writer

Category	N (20)				
Scale	SD	D	NAND	A	SA
F (%)	1 (5%)	5 (25%)	5 (25%)	9 (45%)	0 (0%)

also interviewed a number of the respondents that the writer took it randomly and the interview questions were taken from the questionnaire. The interview duration lasted for 35 minutes. This study was conducted in August 2019 in English Education Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Kristen Indonesia, Jakarta with the total number of the participants is 20. The study was done after the all the participants done their writing of the undergraduate thesis and defended their final project before the examiners. After finishing categorized and analyzed the questionnaire response, the writer also analyzed and summarized the two-open ended questions.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Participants Demographic Data (N= 20).

No	Batch	Gender	Age (in years)		Total	
		Male	Female	21		22
1	2015	5	15	6	14	20

The data demography was focused on gender, age, and batch. There were only few male participants participated in the study. The rest was dominated by the female participants. Their age was varied from 21-22 years old and the total number of the participants was 20.

Table 2: I believe I will do well on the undergraduate thesis.

Category	N (20)				
Scale	SD	D	NAND	A	SA
F (%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (20%)	12 (60%)	4 (20%)

Category	N (20)				
Scale	SD	D	NAND	A	SA
F (%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (20%)	12 (60%)	4 (20%)

Table 2 shows that the majority of the students agree 12 (60%) that they would do well on their undergraduate thesis. Only 4 (20%) of the students stated *strongly agree* that they will do well on the undergraduate thesis. The data is supported by the interview result. The following are some extracts:

I believe I can finish my writing well. (Interviewee, 5)
Even though it is difficult but I think I can write my undergraduate thesis better. (Interviewee,7)

The rest of them might be considered as not believe in what they are writing. The data is also supported by the interview result.

I am not sure I can finish it, but I have to because this is my final writing (Interviewee, 2)

As can be seen in Table 3, it is found out that 9 (45%) of the students agreed that they feel uneasy or uncomfortable with the undergraduate process as a whole. 5 (25%) of the them state that they *neither agree nor disagree* feel uneasy with the undergraduate thesis process as a whole. The total number of the students stating disagree is similar to the result of *neither agree nor disagree* which the percentage is (25%). There is only 1 (5%) of the student stated *strongly disagree* which means that it is easy or comfortable with the undergraduate thesis process as a whole. the result of this findings is supported by the interview. The following is the answer of the students when they were asked whether they feel uneasy or uncomfortable with their undergraduate thesis process as a whole. The following extracts seem to have a positive sense:

I don't think I feel uneasy about my UGT [undergraduate] thesis process as a whole because I think it is more challenging to me. (Interviewee, 8)

No, I don't. I don't feel uneasy because I can follow it all. (Interviewee,7)

Few students have different response. They said that they are even afraid of failure.

Yes, I feel uneasy, I mean I'm afraid of my thesis writing because my grammar is not very good. (Interviewee, 11)

Table 4: I am confident that I can address even the hardest aspects of the undergraduate thesis process.

Category	N (20)				
Scale	SD	D	NAND	A	SA
F (%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	8 (40%)	11 (55%)

Table 4 shows the majority of the students have confidence. It is obviously stated 11 (55%) or more

than a half of the students agreed that they are confident that they can address even the hardest aspects of the undergraduate thesis process. Only 1 (5%) of the students stated *strongly agree* about their confidence on addressing the hardest aspects of undergraduate thesis process. Whereas, 5 (25%) stated that they disagree with the statement given. 2 (10%) of the students stated they *neither agree nor disagree* with the statement. 1 (5%) stated disagree with the statement given.

Table 5: Thinking about the upcoming undergraduate thesis makes me feel anxious.

Category	N (20)				
Scale	SD	D	NAND	A	SA
F (%)	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	5 (25%)	15 (75%)	0 (0%)

Table 5 illustrates that more than a half of the students stated that they *agree* 15 (75%) with thinking about the upcoming undergraduate thesis can make them feel anxious. 5 (25%) of the students stated that they *neither agree nor disagree* whether the upcoming undergraduate thesis makes them feel anxious. Only 1 (5%) of the students feel no anxious regarding the statement of thinking about the upcoming undergraduate thesis. The result also supported by the result of interview. A few of them stated that they feel real anxious when they were asked whether they feel worried about their upcoming undergraduate thesis. The following is the extracts:

Yes, every time I hear the upcoming undergraduate thesis, I feel worried with my writing about my undergraduate thesis. Because I realize I have a lot of mistakes. (Interviewee, 4)

Yes, I worry with my writing. It is because I have poor grammar and not many vocabularies. (Interviewee, 10)

Table 6: The process of writing and defending the undergraduate thesis may be difficult or hard, but I think I will be successful anyway.

Category	N (20)				
Scale	SD	D	NAND	A	SA
F (%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	11 (55%)	9 (45%)

Table 6 shows that the majority of the students stated *strongly agree* 11 (55%) with the process of writing and defending the undergraduate thesis may be difficult or hard, thus they think they would be successful anyway. 8 (40%) of the students stated also *agree* with such situation. Only 1 (5%) student stated *neither agree nor disagree*. The result is supported with the interview. When they were asked whether the process of writing and defending the undergraduate

thesis may be difficult to them. A number of the students stated that they underwent difficulties:

Yes, it is difficult to me. But I must complete it because this is my final. (Interviewee, 2)

Yes, of course it is very difficult. However, I need to finish my writing for I want to graduate this year. (Interviewee, 12)

Yes, I feel it is very hard. (Interviewee, 5)

Table 7: I am worried about how well I will do during the undergraduate thesis defense.

Category	N (20)				
Scale	SD	D	NAND	A	SA
F (%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (10%)	12 (60%)	6 (30%)

Table 7 shows that the majority of the students stated *agree* 12 (60%) that they are worried about how well they would do during the undergraduate thesis defense. 6 (30%) of the students even stated *strongly agree* with such situation. 2 (10%) students stated *neither agree nor disagree* with the situation. The result is also supported with the interview. When they were asked whether that they are worried about how well they would do during the undergraduate thesis defense. A number of the students stated that they were worried facing their undergraduate thesis defense:

Yes, I am very worried with the under graduate thesis defense because I am afraid of making mistakes. (Interviewee, 6)

Yes, I am. I'm also afraid with the teachers' questions (Interviewee, 8)

Yes, if I hear the word exam, I always worry. I don't want to fail. (Interviewee, 9)

Table 8: I know that I have learned the literature and theories that will be necessary to report in the undergraduate thesis.

Category	N (20)				
Scale	SD	D	NAND	A	SA
F (%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	11 (55%)	9 (45%)

Table 8 illustrates that the majority of the students 11 (55%) stated that they *agree* with what they know regarding the literature and theories that will be necessary to report in their undergraduate thesis. The rest of the students 9 (45%) stated that they *strongly agree* with such situation. The result also supported by the result of interview. Most of them stated that the literature and theories are necessary to report in the undergraduate thesis. The following is the extracts:

Yes, I do. It is very important for my writing. (Interviewee, 7)

Yes, it is very necessary to report in the undergraduate thesis because the theories are just like a foundation to help me build the sentences. (Interviewee,10)

Yes, we need it to write in chapter two and they can also become previous studies. (Interviewee, 12)

Table 9: I feel my heart beating faster as I start to think about the undergraduate thesis.

Category	N (20)				
Scale	SD	D	NAND	A	SA
F (%)	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	3 (15%)	9 (45%)	7 (35%)

Table 9 shows that the majority of the students stated *agree* 9 (45%) that they their heart beating faster as they start to think about the undergraduate thesis. 7 (35%) of the students even stated *strongly agree* with such situation. 3 (15%) students stated neither agree nor disagree with the situation. And only 1 (5%) of the students *disagree* with the situation which means the person did not feel worry to think about the undergraduate thesis. The result is also supported with the interview. Most of the students stated that they were worried when they start to think about their undergraduate thesis:

Yes, I am afraid. So, I work very hard to achieve my goal. (Interviewee,1)

Yes, I do. My hearts even beat much faster. I am not worried with the undergraduate thesis, but I'm worried if I can write as my advisors' expectations or not (Interviewee,5)

Table 10: I am sure that I will be able to answer some of the more challenging or difficult questions posed by the undergraduate thesis examiners.

Category	N (20)				
Scale	SD	D	NAND	A	SA
F (%)	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	10 (50%)	6 (30%)	3 (15%)

Table 10 shows that the majority of the students stated *neither agree nor disagree* 10 (50%) whether or not they could answer more challenging questions from the examiners. 6 (30%) students stated that they *agree* with that situation. 3 (15%) of the students stated *strongly agree* with the situation. Whereas, only 1 (5%) of the students disagree with the situation. The result is also supported with the interview. The following extracts reveal that the students neither agree nor disagree:

I don't think I can answer all the questions by the examiners. (Interviewee, 4)

I am not sure if I can answer the questions from the examiners because this is my first time. (Interviewee,12)

Table 11: Thinking about the consequences of failing some component of the undergraduate thesis process makes me uptight.

Category	N (20)				
Scale	SD	D	NAND	A	SA
F (%)	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	7 (35%)	12 (60%)	0 (0%)

Table 11 illustrates that the majority of the students 12 (60%) stated that they *agree* with thinking about the consequences of failing some component of the undergraduate thesis process makes them uptight. 7 (35%) of them stated that they *neither agree nor disagree* with such situation. 1(5%) of them sated *disagree* with the situation. The result also supported by the result of interview. The following is the extracts: *Yes, I do. I feel it that way. I mean I feel uptight because I am afraid of failure. (Interviewee, 7)*

Yes, I feel real tense but I have to face it(Interviewee,11)

The following findings discuss the open-ended questions responded by the students. The writer categorized similar responses into the same classification. The first question deals with aspects of the undergraduate thesis process they most fear or are most concerned about as well as explaining why they fear or are concerned about each aspect they identify. It is found out that the students have various answers to the question.

The following similar responses answered by a number of students:

The questions of examiners.it makes me fear (Respondent, 1)

when the examiners asked me about the content and theories. sometimes I think examiners does not want to hear all of the explanation and only judge the student. (Respondent,14)

When the examiner asked (Respondent, 15)

I'm concerned about the thesis defense. Thinking about the question will be asked and also worried about the punctuality of the literature reviews. (Respondent, 17)

Other students responded that the writing of chapter 4 is the most aspect they concerned about.

Chapter 4 result (Respondent, 2)

Writing the result of the data in chapter 4, I am afraid to writing wrong data. (Respondent, 5)

Chapter 4 (Respondent, 13)

Result, because I'm worried if my calculation is not valid. (Respondent, 18)

Whereas other students responded that data analysis process is the most aspect they concerned about.

The data analysis process, because it requires accuracy in doing it and will be fatal if wrong in the process (Respondent, 6)

The process and the result of my writing. because I think my writing still far from the criteria of good writing. it caused by the grammar, the diction, and the structure. (Respondent, 10)

The rest of the students have different answers

The writing of undergraduate thesis. Because, I think it was the most complicated problem that all researchers must face. The researcher must be careful to make the it scientific and also the purpose must be make sense. (Respondent, 4)

What I feared the most was during the thesis exam. not because I do not know what the contents and answers but excessive nervous I'm sure it will make everything disappear (Respondent, 8)

Time, I can not manage my time well. (Respondent,16)
Aspects of the UGT most fear for me are background and abstract. (Respondent,20)

To sum up the first open-ended question. It is clear that the students have different aspects of the undergraduate thesis process they most fear even though a number of them have similar answers.

The second question deals with aspects of the undergraduate thesis process they most comfortable with or confident about as well as explaining why they comfortable with or confident about each aspect they identify. It is found out that the students have various answers to the question.

The following respondents have similar responses:

Chapter 2 literature review (Respondent, 2)
Literature review because it is from the experts (Respondent, 18)
Aspects of UGT process most comfortable for me is literature because, in literature I just found some theories according to my title UGT. (Respondent, 20)

Other respondents have different answers:

The calculation of the research data obtained. Because I love it. (Respondent, 4)
Conclusion, because it just conclude all the result of the study (Respondent, 6)
Presentating my research, i feel comfortable bcs the research is my own and i know every detail and point to be present (Respondent, 12)

I'm enough confident about the result finding of the research has been conducted since it is quantity so by using SPSS the result is accurate (Respondent, 17)

In summary, it is obvious that the students have their own problems in the process of writing until their undergraduate thesis defense.

4. CONCLUSION

The results of the study have shown that the majority of the students have anxiety on their undergraduate thesis process. As for the teachers or faculties members need to consider some aspects from the result of the study in the sense that when the students are supervised, it is highly suggested to at least minimize or reduce the anxiety by creating more relaxed and motivated atmosphere. As a result, the students may experience a more enjoyable both in generating the beginning of writing and on the day of their final project is about to defend.

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