

Chapter One

Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher explains about the research background, problem identification, problem limitation, research question of challenges in undergraduate thesis making faced by working or employed students. The researcher also put more details about the objective of the study and its significances.

Research Background

Undergraduate thesis according to Suyadi (2011) is research that arranged systematically based on norms, scientific ways, and ethics. In Indonesia, this kind of research is called *skripsi* and becomes one of the requirements for college students in order to achieve an undergraduate degree as cited from Permendikbud (2014). Indonesian Act. No. 20. Year 2003 about National Standard of Indonesian Education in article number 25, clause 1 written that all of the universities whether state or private should design their own regulation for students' graduation. Ministerial of Culture and Education of Indonesia also added three highlight points about *skripsi*. First, *sarjana* or undergraduate degree should include research as one of the subjects. Second, the research should be a collaborative project between a student and a lecturer. Third, the regulation about the research will be decided by the university.

This kind of graduation requirement that applied in Indonesia clearly have some similarities within other countries. United States of America (USA) also have some kind of research activity for their senior students called senior thesis. For

example, as cited from Harvard University official websites, besides the requirement to complete 32 courses or 128 credits students need to achieve B in all their subjects and recommendation from their professor before conducting senior thesis. Meanwhile, Japan universities have two choices other than undergraduate thesis or their research seminar that can be finished within two years (four semesters) under professor supervisory, which are Independent Study Project and Professional Career Program. Independent study project will be chosen by students that have an interest outside their major while the other picked by those who like professional class but still students need to fulfill some basics requirement for courses. In Temple University, upon completion of 80 semester hours including transfer credits, bachelor's degree candidates (40 credits for Associate's degree candidates) should request graduation review with an academic advisor from the Academic Advising Center to determine whether or not they are meeting the university, college, and major requirements for their degree.

Even so, there are some countries that not applied undergraduate thesis, for example, Australia. After three years of studies, students could claim their bachelor degree through an examination. Students may conduct optional research to add honours degree that will allow them to skip postgraduate study. A similar kind of system also adopted by Singapore for their college. There are only 72 credits that could be finished in two years. Per semester, that consist of three months, students only allowed to grab four courses or subjects.

Unfortunately, as one of the requirements to graduate, undergraduate thesis or *skripsi* sometimes cannot be done by students in short amount of times. This is a

very common phenomenon between students since obstacles and challenges may appear in the making (Wiyatmo, Mundilarto, Suharyanto, & Widodo, 2010). Some students take more The challenges may come in various such writing capability (Felder, 2005). This finding also supported by Darmono and Hassan in Aini and Mahadayani (2011) by stating unfamiliarity with academic writing may make students end up with confusion while working on it. As cited in Purnamasari (2014), finding literature or similar prior research that supports their *skripsi* is one of the inhibiting factors faced by students in *skripsi* writing. Everything will be harder if advisor lecturer came out hard to meet even though *skripsi* should be a collaboration project for them and students (Purnamasari, 2014). If those challenges are not handled properly then students could have dropped out from their institution.

Massive dropping out phenomenon can be a menace or threat for Indonesia since it can prevent them to become upper middle-income country. That is because the number of university graduates in the whole country is still small compared to the population according to Merdeka.com in “Only have 20% from its population able to go to college, the developed country status will be out of reach for Indonesia” (2014). Not to mention the quality of graduates cannot yet compete globally. Yuwono (2014) believed that only 20% or six million from a total of 240 million Indonesian got the chance to go to college. As a comparison, South Korea is able to reach the number 90%. Although data submitted by Indonesian Central Bureau of Statistics said that the university's unemployment rate in February 2018 (6,31%) rose by 1.13 percent compared to February 2017 (5,18%), the ambition of Indonesia to become one of the middle-income countries cannot be ignored.

Buku Statistik Pendidikan Tinggi (2017) mentioned that 47.913 are dropped out with 96% of them came from private universities. According to the same source, Province of Bengkulu is the highest contributor with 8,24% or 3947 students and only two of them came from state universities. Kepulauan Riau stood in the second position with 7,5% followed by East Java (4,54%) and Nusa Tenggara Barat (4,20%). Yogyakarta as a city named 'Students City' surprisingly came tenth with 12.425 students dropped out (3,3%). Funding and skripsi are the most popular cause.

The researcher found many cases of challenges in *skripsi* making on its students especially for those who work while conducting their study by arranged several informal interviews and observation. Since Permendikbud applied the rule of ten semesters for each student in 2014, then October 2019 will likely become the students' last chance to graduate. Based on the researcher's self-observation, the challenges in *skripsi* writing come in different forms such as time management, demotivation, or simply the students just could not find the suitable materials for their research.

There is always a chance for students to get distracted from their path towards graduation if they are working at the same time during *skripsi* writing process. According to Mardelina and Muhson (2017), there is a possibility for students to abandon their *skripsi* once they are financially independent. Lack of motivation eventually will lead them to drop out from campus. Cited from Metriana (2014), Center of Education Statistic found that working for 16 hours or more will affect students' achievement negatively. Gleason in Metriana (2014) also expressed

the same argument. Employed students tend to be wealthier but their grades will be not as good as those who only focus on studying. From 250 participants, there are 91 of them (44,4%) are employed and the other 114 (55,6%) are not. What is interesting is that only 26, 4% of employed students can graduate with *cumlaude* (GPA >3,50) predicate. On the other hand, the other group reached 54,4% percentage. This finding is actually far from surprising since 16,7% students from the unemployed group classified in 'high learning activity student'. In that category, there are only 9,9% students from the employed group. 'Low learning activity student' category, as predicted, dominated by the employed group with 33% while the other only had 13,2%. Since GPA is also determined by skripsi then everything is related.

At this point, the researcher found that the issue is worth to study. The researcher believed that incapability from students to balance their working and academic life may lead to dropping out according to Dadgar in Metriyana (2014). Findings from this research may help either lecturers or students to understand what kind of problems that may appear in *skripsi* writing and hopefully found ways to avoid them.

Problem Identification

From several informal interviews and self-observation by the researcher, working learners do face some challenges in their skripsi writing. Meanwhile, skripsi is one of the main requirements for them to get their degree. On many occasions, the researcher found that bad time management is the main reason why students with a job found some struggles to handle their responsibility. They do not

know which they should be prioritized between career or education. With focus issues, motivation to accomplish their study may also vanish. Employed learners tend to be wealthier but once they achieved financial independency, *skripsi* and any other obligation as a student often left abandoned. This is why the reason why the researcher grows some interest for the case.

Limitation of the Research

This study is mainly focused to find working students' challenges in *skripsi* writing. In other words, the researcher wants to understand the factors that delay students to finish their undergraduate thesis on time. Any factors that arose from reduced studying time from working also will be examined. It needs to be noted that challenges have slight differences with inhibiting factors. While challenges only hamper students' *skripsi* completion time, inhibiting factors completely stop them from doing it. The later point will not be discussed in this very research.

Research Question

What are the challenges in *skripsi* writing that faced by working students?

Research Significances

This study is going to be useful for the following parties:

Working students. The findings from this study could help students, especially those who work while finishing their *skripsi*, to understand more about challenges in their cases. It may encourage them to avoid the problems that may appear or even better find solutions. Correlation between college dropping and unemployment in Indonesia may become another boost to the students. Working while studying may be too hard for some people so consideration will be a huge

key.

Skripsi advisors. This research can provide information about the average challenges in *skripsi* writing for working students which can help them to prepare solutions in order to deal with it. Teachers or lecturers also can facilitate students with job in hand by creating a college environment that suits the conditions such as giving them more time flexibility for *skripsi* consultation section.

Next researchers. The findings from this study may help next researchers to find references about challenges in *skripsi* writing especially for about challenges in *skripsi* writing for employed students or students in general. Literature about final project or undergraduate thesis or *skripsi* also can be found.

Students' employer. Company or institution with active university students in the wage list may take the results of this research as a reference to create a policy, such as friendly working schedule, for their employees with undergraduate status.