

# **Factors Causing Delays for Higher Education Students in Completing Final Undergraduate Assignments**

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*Procrastination often occurs among students in higher education. Facts in higher education in 2018 from 27 students were found, and 22.22% of students had not attended a proposal seminar and had not completed a final assignment or thesis, 40.74% of students had attended a proposal seminar but had not completed a final assignment or thesis, and 37, 03% of students have attended proposal seminars and have completed their final assignments or theses. This is an urgent matter to research because there is a gap between theory, expectations, and reality in the field. The research aims to find out what factors cause procrastination, which causes students to be late in completing their thesis in higher education. The research method is descriptive qualitative. The subject and object are higher education, totaling 34 students. Data collection techniques using questionnaires, interviews, and direct observation of students. Analysis techniques by collecting data, reducing and drawing conclusions. Data is depicted in diagrams, and the results of interviews and observations are interpreted. As a result, it was found that students working on their thesis encountered many obstacles due to internal factors, namely self-control, self-efficacy, and motivation. In the process of completing the final assignment or thesis, students must learn to motivate themselves, control themselves, and develop high self-efficacy so that students can focus more on completing their thesis.*

*Keywords: higher education, student procrastination, student final assignment*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Higher education provides education at the advanced level of upper secondary education in the formal education pathway (Krstikj et al., 2022; Haas & Hadjar, 2020). This is by the understanding that higher education is a higher level that a person can obtain in education after upper secondary education. Higher

education includes diploma, bachelor's, specialist master's, and doctoral education programs organized by universities (Santos et al., 2020; Ghani et al., 2022; Tight, 2020). "Higher education in the world can take the form of polytechnics, high schools, academics, universities and institutes of every type (Alam & Asimiran, 2021; Abad-Segura et al., 2020). These universities usually have several majors or study programs offered. Every prospective student who will enter a university will be faced with choosing the study program or major that he or she will enter. Choosing a study program for them is a moment that determines the future in every phase of life. Study programs at the Faculty of Higher Education require students to complete all semester credit systems, including completing a final assignment or thesis (Boarin et al., 2020; Dyck et al., 2020). A final assignment or thesis in higher education is a scientific work written by undergraduate students that discusses a particular topic or field based on the results of literature reviews written by experts, the results of field research, or the results of the development of previous research (Nind & Katramadou, 2023. Miranda et al., 2021) states that the definition of a final project or thesis is scientific work in a field of study created by undergraduate students at the end of their studies as a requirement to complete the study program. The study must be based on scientific research, whether field research, library research, or development research. So, it can be concluded that the definition of a thesis is a scientific work that must be written by a student as a condition for completing an undergraduate program to obtain the desired undergraduate degree (Rahiem, 2021; Cheung et al., 2020).

Preparing a final assignment or thesis in a study program in higher education is one part of the entire teaching and learning process and is a graduation requirement for students (Dafouz, 2020). However, in completing the final assignment or thesis, students often encounter obstacles or difficulties and are often late in completing it. (Gabriely et al., 2020) states that ten factors cause procrastination so that students are slow in completing their final assignments, which consist of Anxiety, Low self-esteem, Low tolerance for discomfort, Seeking pleasure, Time disorganization, Environmental disorganization, Weak approach to tasks, Lack of assertiveness, Hostility with others and Stress and fatigue. The term procrastination comes from the Latin procrastination with the prefix "pro," which means pushing forward or moving forward, and the suffix "castings," which means tomorrow's decision (Xiao & Spanjol, 2021). The term procrastination in psychology is defined as the tendency to delay starting or completing overall performance to carry out other useless activities, resulting in hampered performance, never completing tasks on time, and often being late for meetings (Svartdal et al., 2020). Ferrari, et al. Pekpazar et al., (2021) define academic procrastination as the tendency to always postpone work on academic tasks and always or almost always experience disturbing anxiety related to procrastination. Academic procrastination deliberately delays desired activities even though the individual knows that the delaying behavior could have negative impacts (Jiang et al., 2020). Academic procrastination is deliberately and repeatedly delaying starting or completing an academic task, and replacing it with another activity that is more enjoyable to oneself and is not so important that it hinders the academic performance of the individual or others (Bean et al., 2020). The behavior of voluntarily postponing work that has been scheduled and is important to do, results in emotional, physical, and academic consequences (Tandon et al., 2021). Chen et al., (2020) also, procrastination is the behavior of procrastinating on work where someone feels disturbed by the delay because of fear. Tan & Samavedham, (2022) say that procrastination can be divided into two types, namely functional procrastination, namely delaying carrying out tasks aimed at obtaining more complete and accurate information, and dysfunctional, which is a delay with no purpose, which has bad consequences and causes problems. Brando-Garrido et al., (2020) explains that procrastination has two characteristics. First, procrastination can mean delaying an important and difficult task in favor of an easier one. It's quicker to complete and causes less anxiety. Second, procrastination can also mean waiting for the right time to act so that the results are maximum and the risks are minimal compared to if it were done or completed as usual, at a predetermined time. From several expert opinions above, it can be concluded that academic procrastination is a behavior of procrastinating or starting to do an academic task that has been given and takes a long time to complete, which if done repeatedly can become a habit.

Characteristics of Procrastination Pu et al., (2022) say that as a procrastination behavior, academic procrastination can be manifested in certain indicators that can be measured and observed. Certain characteristics include: 1) Delay in starting and completing assignments, Delay in starting and completing

the tasks at hand. Someone who carries out procrastination knows that the task at hand must be completed immediately. However, he delays starting work on it or delays completing it to completion if he has started work before. 2) Delay in carrying out tasks. People who carry out procrastination need more time than is generally required to complete a task. A procrastinator spends the time he has to prepare himself excessively. Apart from that, he also does things that are not needed to complete a task, without considering his limited time. Sometimes, these actions result in a person not being able to complete their tasks adequately. Inertia in the sense of someone's slowness in carrying out a task, can be the main characteristic of academic procrastination. 3) Time gap between plans and actual performance. A procrastinator has difficulty doing something within a predetermined time limit. A procrastinator often experiences delays in meeting deadlines that have been determined, either by other people or plans that he has set himself. A person may have planned to start working on a task at a time he has determined for himself. However, when the time comes, he does not do it according to what has been planned, causing delays or failure to complete the task adequately. 4) Doing activities that are more fun, doing other activities that are more fun than doing the tasks that must be done. A procrastinator deliberately does not immediately carry out his duties. However, using the time he has to do other activities that are considered more fun and provide entertainment, such as reading (newspapers, magazines, or other story books), watching movies, chatting, walking, listening to music, and so on, takes up the time he has. to carry out the tasks that must be completed (Bruyneel & Duclos, 2020).

In this case, researchers also collected data about academic procrastination of final assignments/thesis in study programs in higher education. The number of students graduating in 2018 was 27 people, and 22.22% of students had not taken part in a proposal seminar and had not completed their final assignment or thesis, 40.74% of students had attended a proposal seminar but had not completed their final assignment or thesis, and 37.03% of students had attended a proposal seminar and completed the final assignment or thesis. Based on the data, many students still have not completed their final assignments. This data shows that it is urgent to research because there is a gap between theory, expectations, and reality in the field. So, this researcher "Analyzed the Factors Causing Procrastination Which causes mathematics Education Students to Be Late in Completing Their Final Assignments".

Restricting the problem. So that this research is more focused, directed, and can be studied in more depth, the problems must be limited. Therefore, the researcher limits the problem to analyze the causal factors in the research subject which will only be taken on final year students who are late in completing their thesis. Formulation of the problem. Based on the background and limitations of the problem, problems can be formulated as to what factors cause procrastination, which causes students to be late in completing their thesis in higher education. Research purposes. Based on the problem formulation, this research aims to find out what factors cause procrastination, which causes students to be late in completing their thesis in higher education.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This type of research is descriptive qualitative research (Tomaszewski et al., 2020). Gourishankar et al., (2020) explain that descriptive research is research that describes symptoms, events, and occurrences that occur. In descriptive research, the researcher does not give special treatment to the event. Sovacool et al., (2020) define qualitative research as a procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written words spoken by people and observable behavior. Research Subjects: The subjects of this research are students of the 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021 Higher Education study programs who were identified as being late in completing their thesis or final assignment. In writing the subject, the researcher used an accidental sampling technique. Accidental sampling is a technique for determining samples based on chance, that is, anyone the researcher meets by chance can be used as a sample, if that person is deemed suitable as a data source (Sovacool et al., 2020). Students are also final-year students who have not completed their thesis. Based on the rules set by higher education regarding maximum study limits. The research time for questionnaire data collection activities was carried out for three months.

Techniques and Data Collection. Taylor et al., (2020) said that data is a record of a collection of facts or evidence from the results of using research instruments. Data can describe a situation or problem but does not have meaning and still requires processing. Data collection techniques are very important in research because this is a strategy or method researchers use to obtain the data needed in their research. To obtain complete facts and by the research focus, the data collection techniques in this research are as follows:

**TABLE 1**  
**TABLE OF DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES**

Data	Data Collection Techniques	Instrument
Data on Procrastination Factors	Questionnaire (questionnaire)	Questionnaire document
Data Confirmation of Procrastination Factors	Interview	interview guidelines

The term questionnaire is one of the most popular data collection instruments used in educational and social research. In the questionnaire, several questions or statements are closely related to the research problem to be solved. This questionnaire was formed from validated procrastination factors and then developed into an instrument. The following are the questionnaire indicators and procrastination factors that will be used in this research:

**TABLE 2**  
**INDICATORS AND FACTORS CAUSING PROCRASTINATION**

No	Factor	Indicator
1.	Physical condition	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Feeling lazy and lazy about working on your thesis or studying if you are not healthy</li> <li>2. Postpone working on your thesis if your body is not fit</li> </ol>
2.	Self-motivation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The desire to complete the thesis is low</li> <li>2. Depends on external stimuli to achieve goals</li> <li>3. The thesis is ignored if you have no interest in it</li> </ol>
3.	Self-Efficacy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The level of difficulty of a task</li> <li>2. The level of confidence in one's abilities is low</li> <li>3. Generality, namely the wide range of behavior that individuals are capable of carrying out</li> </ol>
4.	Self-control	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Low self-discipline</li> <li>2. Be impulsive</li> <li>3. Don't want to finish the thesis without being influenced by other things</li> <li>4. Having a low self-esteem</li> </ol>
5.	Self-awareness	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Lack of recognition of emotions</li> <li>2. Lack of accurate self-recognition, namely having knowledge of inner resources, as well as the advantages and disadvantages they have</li> <li>3. Low self-confidence, namely a strong awareness of one's self-worth and abilities</li> </ol>
6.	Environment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Low supervision</li> <li>2. Environmental disorganization</li> </ol>

Interview. An interview is a conversation with a specific purpose. The conversation is carried out by two parties, namely the interviewer, who asks questions, and the interviewee, who provides answers to

those questions (Monforte & Úbeda-Colomer, 2021). The main characteristic of an interview is direct face-to-face contact between the information seeker and the information source. Various questions were prepared in the interview, but various other questions emerged during the research. Through interviews, researchers explore data, information, and information frameworks from research subjects. The interview technique used is a guided interview, meaning that the questions asked have been prepared in advance. Interviews were conducted with four Mathematics Education students who were late in completing their thesis and two thesis supervisors. Observation is a research activity to collect data related to research problems through a direct observation process in the field. Researchers are there to obtain valid evidence in the report that will be submitted. Observation is a data collection method where researchers record information as they witness it during research (Natow, 2020). Data Validity Test. Checking the validity of the data, apart from being used to refute accusations against qualitative research which is said to be unscientific, is also an inseparable element of the body of qualitative research knowledge (Hall & Martin, 2019). The validity of the data is carried out to prove whether the research carried out is truly scientific research as well as to test the data obtained. Testing the validity of data in qualitative research includes testing, credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Laumann, 2020). So that the data in qualitative research can be accounted for as scientific research, it is necessary to test the validity of the data. The data validity tests that can be carried out are as follows: Credibility. The credibility test is the internal validity of research data presented by researchers so that the research results are not in doubt as scientific work was carried out.

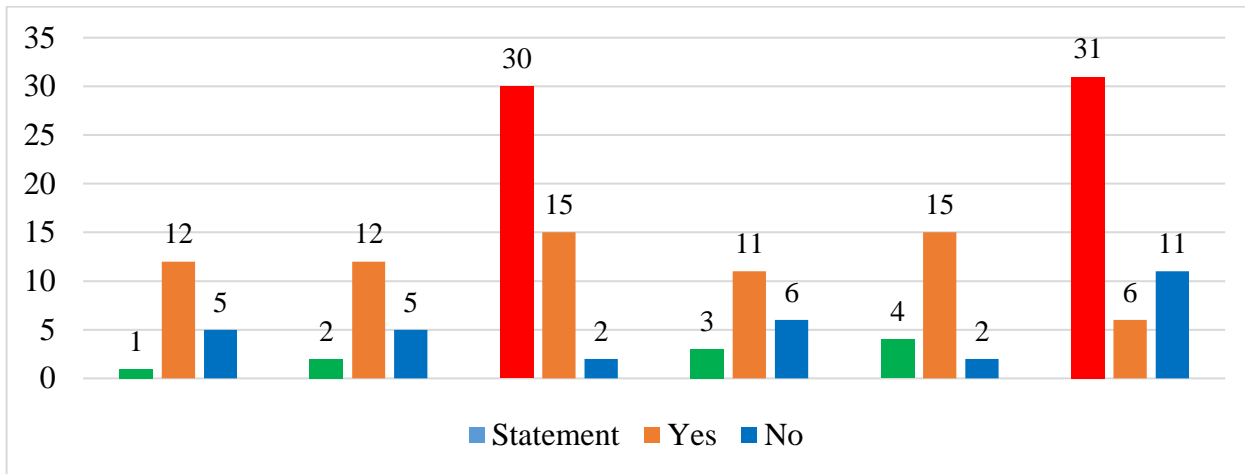
Data analysis technique. The questionnaire results were examined by researchers to find out what factors caused students to be late in completing their thesis. Next, four students and two thesis supervisors were selected to be interviewed by the researcher to confirm whether what they filled in the questionnaire was appropriate or not and to look for other things that caused students to be late in completing their thesis. Stages of Data Collection Phase II. This activity is carrying out interviews with four students and two thesis supervisors. Data Collection Analysis Stages Phase II. The researcher analyzes the data from interviews with four students and two thesis supervisors and then describes them completely. Data Analysis Stages. The researcher analyzes all the data obtained from 2 data collection techniques (questionnaires and interviews) with qualitative analysis techniques. Data analysis consists of stages: data presentation, analysis of procrastination factors, and conclusion. Data Validity Stages. The validity of the conclusions obtained from the analysis stage is tested using triangulation techniques.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

In higher education, students from the 2018-2021 class experienced delays for one semester because their final assignments or theses had not been completed. 22.22% of students have not attended a proposal seminar and have not completed their final assignment/thesis, 40.74% of students have attended a proposal seminar, but have not completed their final assignment/thesis, and 37.03% of students have attended a proposal seminar and have completed their final assignment. /Thesis. This data appears due to several factors and is based on the findings of the description of the questionnaire results for each factor. The distribution of the online questionnaire link in the form of objective questions was carried out in the 2018-2021 class which was given via personal chat. This questionnaire was titled "Factors Causing Procrastination of Higher Education Students' Final Assignments". This questionnaire was distributed to 17 students who graduated late or who had not finished their thesis. In the questionnaire grid, there are favorable and unfavorable statements. A favorable statement is a statement that supports or favors the research object, while an unfavorable statement is a statement that does not support it.

## Physical Condition

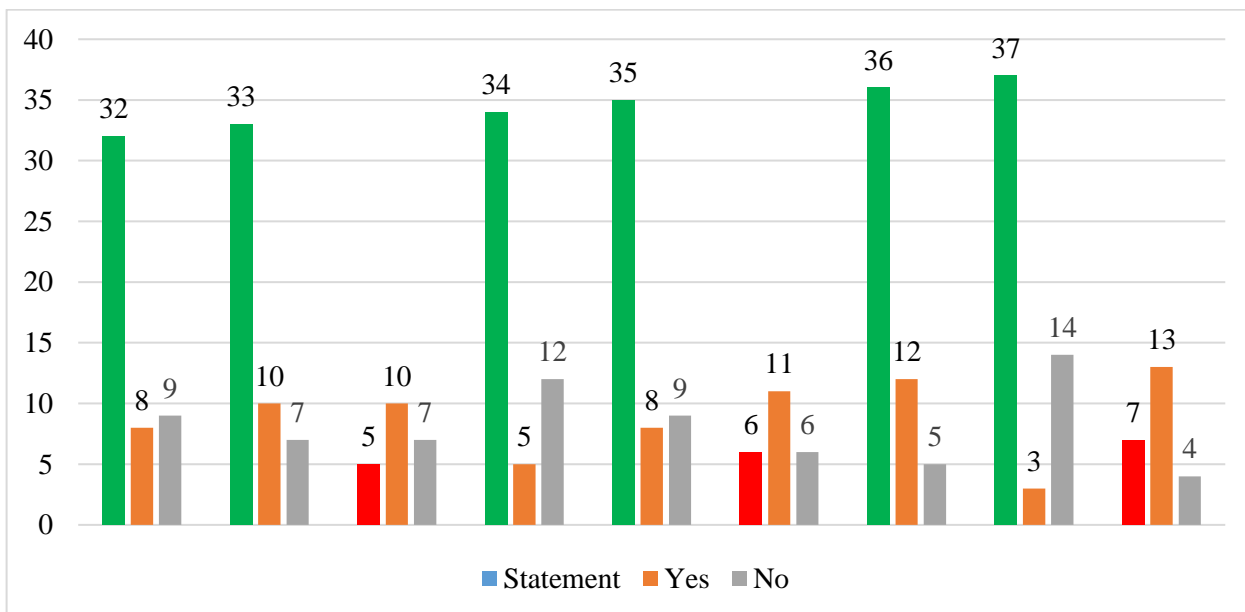
**FIGURE 1  
PHYSICAL CONDITION**



In the physical condition factor, statements 1, 2, 3, and 4 are favorable, while statements 30 and 31 are unfavorable. Based on the bar diagram, statement number 4 (Recently I often feel sick so I tend to procrastinate completing my thesis) with a total of 88.2% (choice “Yes”) is the most decisive statement compared to the other statements.

## Self-Motivation

**FIGURE 2  
SELF-MOTIVATION**

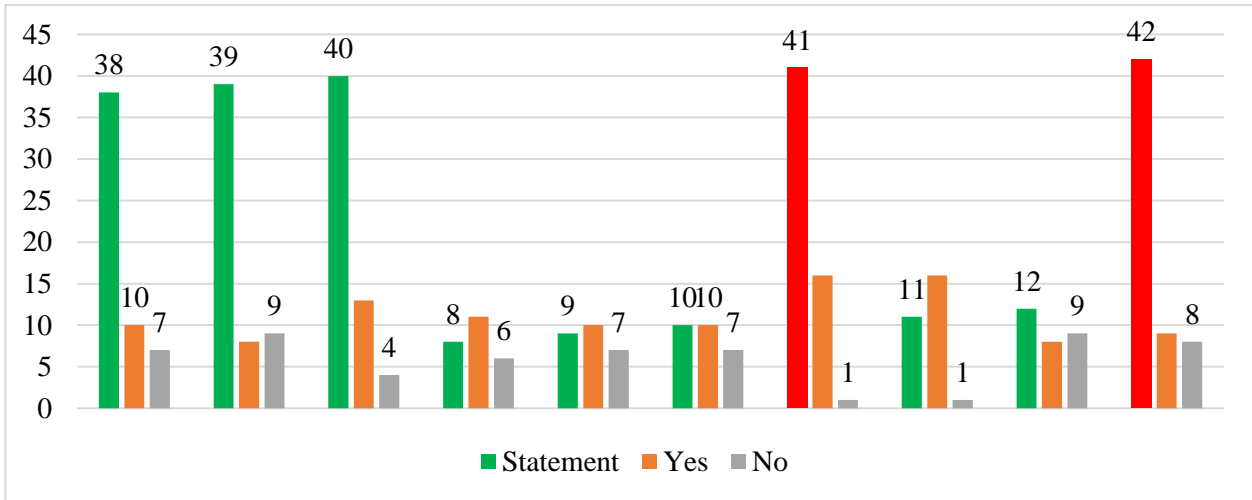


In the self-motivation factor, statements number 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, and 37 are favorable statements while statements number 5, 6, and 7 are unfavorable statements. Based on the bar chart, statement number

36 (I feel happier doing other work as a form of escape from the pressure of the thesis) with a total of 70.6% (choice “Yes”) is the most determinant statement from the other statements.

### Self-Efficacy

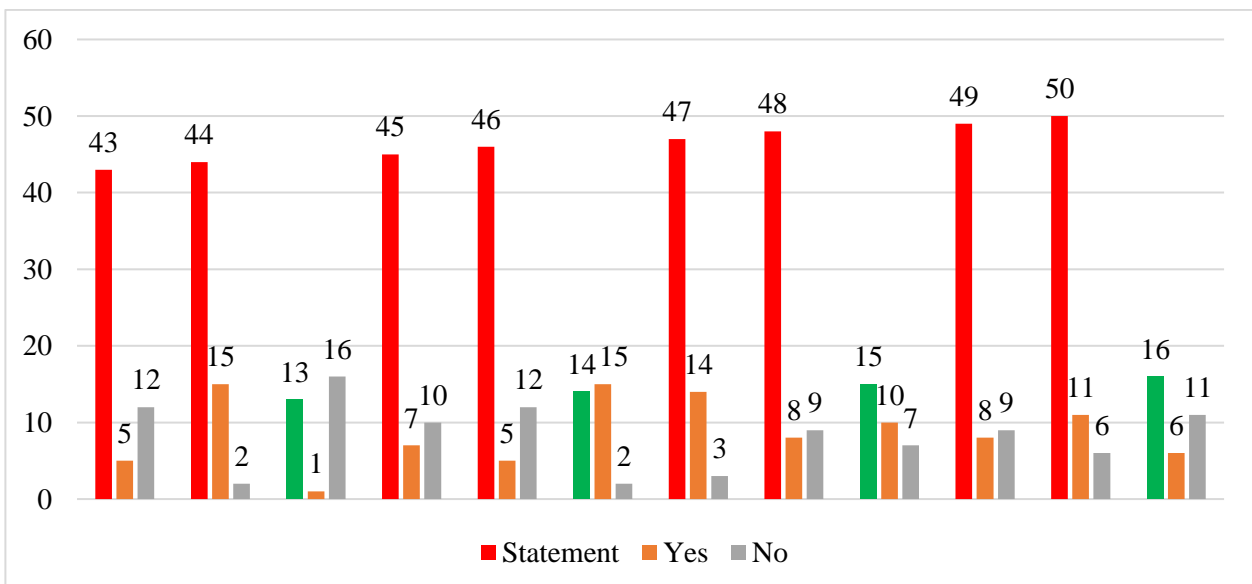
**FIGURE 3  
SELF-EFFICACY**



In the self-efficacy factor, statements 38, 39, 40, 9, 10, 11, and 12 are favorable statements, while statements 8, 41, and 42 are unfavorable. Based on the bar chart, statement number 11 (I need more concentration when working on the instrument), with a total of 94.1% (choice “Yes”) is the most determinant statement from the other statements.

### Self-Control

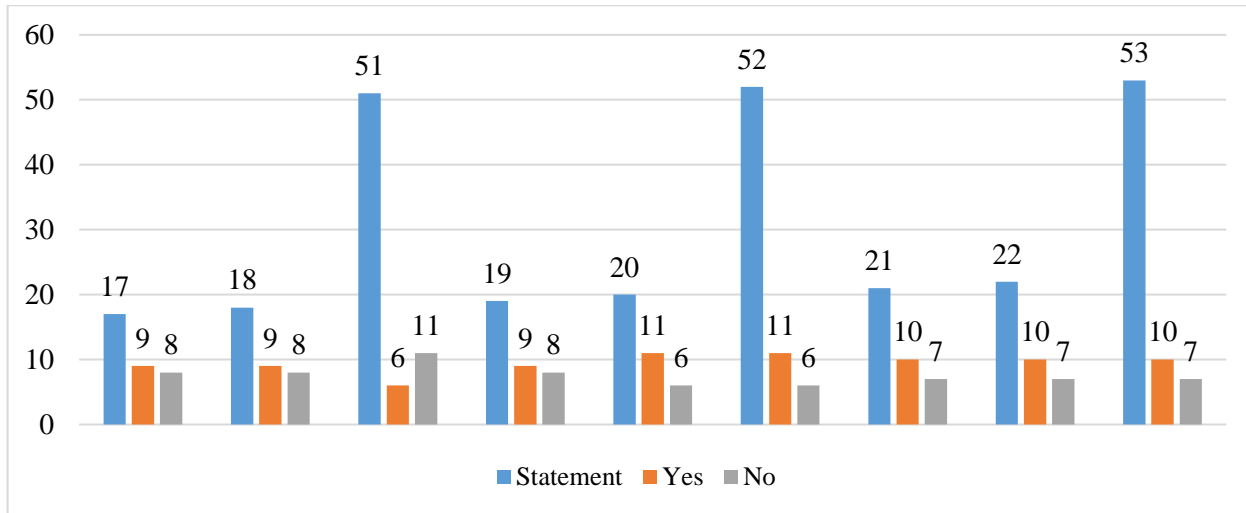
**FIGURE 4  
SELF CONTROL**



In the self-control factor, statements 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49 and 50 are favorable statements, while statements 13, 14, 15 and 16 are unfavorable. Based on the bar diagram, statement number 13 (I carry out the thesis work schedule in an orderly manner) with a total of 94.1% (choice “No”) is the most determinant statement compared to the other statements.

**Self-Awareness**

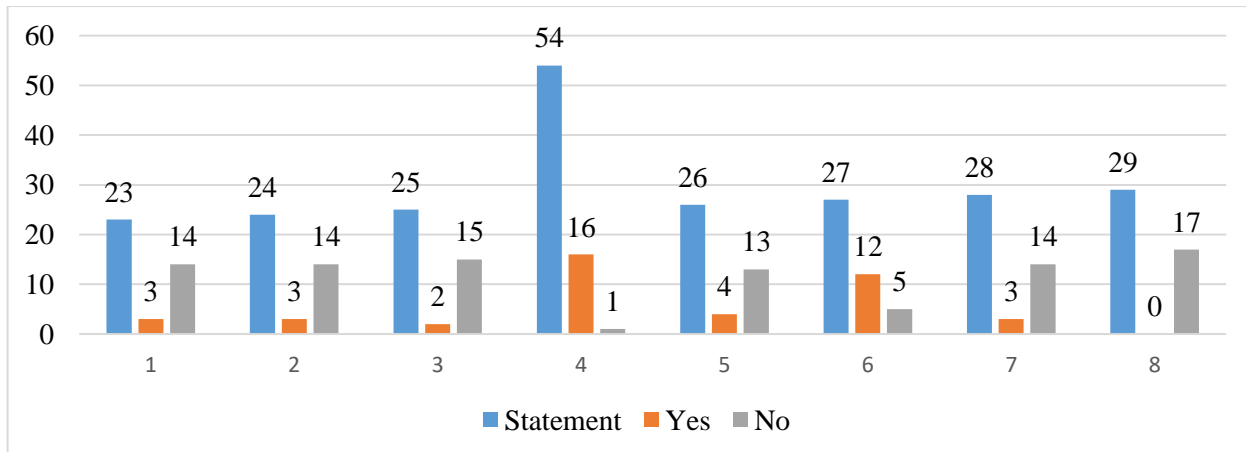
**FIGURE 5  
SELF-AWARENESS**



In the self-awareness factor, statements 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, and 22 are favorable statements while statements 51, 52, and 53 are unfavorable. Based on the bar diagram, statements number 20 (I become quickly irritated if someone asks about my thesis) (choice “Yes”) and 51 (I can manage my emotions well even though I am under pressure when writing my thesis) (choice “No”) with a total of 64.7% are the statements that are the most determinant of the other statements.

**Environment**

**FIGURE 6  
ENVIRONMENT**

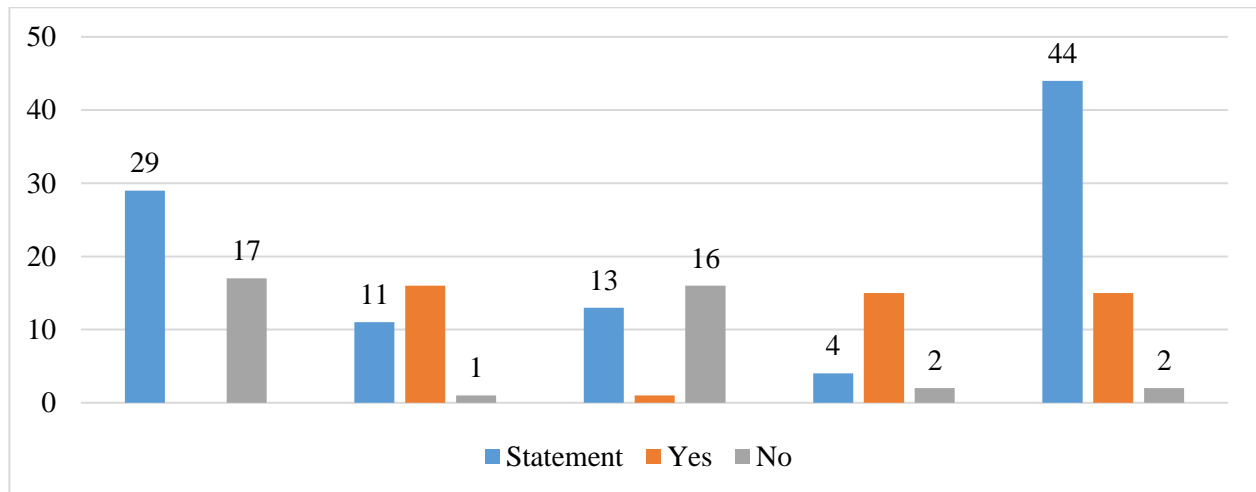




In environmental factors, statements 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, and 28 are favorable, while statements 54 and 29 are unfavorable. Based on the bar diagram, statement number 29 (I have a schedule to work on my thesis with my friends) with a total of 100% (choice “No”) is the most determinant statement among the other statements.

### Description of Questionnaire Results on Statements that Have the Highest Percentage

**FIGURE 7**  
**STATEMENTS WITH THE HIGHEST PERCENTAGE**



Statements 11, 4, and 44 are favorable statements, while statements 29 and 13 are unfavorable. Based on the bar diagram, statement number 29 (I have a schedule to work on my thesis with friends - Environment) is worth 100% (choice “No”), statement number 11 (I need more concentration when working on the instrument - Self-Efficacy) is worth 94.1% (choice “Yes”), statement number 13 (I carry out the thesis work schedule in an orderly manner - Self-Control) is worth 94.1% (choice “No”), statement number 4 (I cannot continue reading the journal for the thesis if my body is not fit - Physical Condition) is worth 88.2% (choice “Yes”), and statement number 44 (I find it difficult to fight the feeling of laziness in me when I want to work on my thesis - Self Control) is worth 88.2% (choice “Yes”)

### Description of Interview Results

The results of interviews studying delays in completing undergraduate final assignments revealed in-depth information from both students and thesis supervisors. Four students who were late in completing their thesis, as well as two thesis supervisors, took part in the interview. Interviews provide a deeper understanding of the challenges and motivations experienced by students during the thesis completion process. One common theme that emerged from the interviews was the impact of physical conditions on student productivity. Several students said that when they were unwell, they found it difficult to muster the motivation to work on their thesis. This highlights the importance of physical well-being in academic performance and task completion. In terms of self-motivation, respondents expressed a strong desire to complete their thesis. This motivation comes from various sources, including support from family members, the prospect of getting a job after graduating, the dream of becoming a civil servant, and encouragement from parents. These external motivators play an important role in encouraging students to overcome procrastination and stay focused on their academic goals. Overall, the interviews highlight the complex interplay of factors that influence students’ progress in completing their final assignments. Self-control, self-efficacy, and external motivation emerge as important elements in determining students’ success in meeting deadlines. These findings underscore the importance of addressing these factors to support students

in overcoming procrastination and completing their academic assignments on time. These findings support the educational curriculum which continues to be developed.

### **Description of Observation Results**

The results of the study's observations regarding delays in completing undergraduate final assignments provided valuable insight from two thesis supervisors. Observations revealed important patterns in students' behavior and attitudes toward completing their thesis. One of the main observations is that some students fail to complete their assignments on time due to a lack of motivation and initiative. This lack of encouragement hinders their progress and contributes to delays in completing their thesis work. Additionally, the study noted that although some students demonstrated proactive behavior and took the initiative to work on their assignments, others struggled to maintain consistent effort. This diversity in student engagement and motivation highlights the diverse challenges students face when working on their final assignments. These observations underscore the importance of motivation and self-discipline in a student's academic journey. By recognizing differences in behavior and attitudes among students, educators, and supervisors can adapt curricula, methods, and strategies in support of them to meet individual needs and increase student success in completing their thesis assignments within the specified time limits.

### **Discussion**

After the research is carried out, methods are triangulated, namely questionnaires, interviews, and observations. Of these three methods, self-control, self-efficacy, and motivation are the dominant factors in students completing their thesis. In the self-efficacy section, several answers doubted their ability to complete the thesis, such as having difficulty building self-confidence and feeling that the thesis assignment was too heavy and some respondents were busy outside campus or working so the thesis work was neglected. In the self-control section, this is an important thing for respondents in completing their thesis, some respondents work on their thesis in a hurry, are not focused, are slow to understand something, and feel unable or slow in completing their thesis. In the self-awareness section, a student must have the high level of awareness needed to complete a thesis, and not get angry easily if someone asks about the thesis. Some respondents answered that they were not embarrassed to ask questions or express opinions, and some quickly became offended if someone asked about their thesis. In the environmental section, environmental factors influence the condition of students, such as parents who are not indifferent to the thesis writing process, so they help the thesis writing process. Several respondents answered that the supervisor was very helpful when the respondent did not immediately complete the thesis by advising and providing strong motivation so that students became enthusiastic. Other things caused delays in completing the thesis, some respondents answered that there was anxiety, worry, fear, laziness, and boredom. This finding is in line with findings in previous research which stated that students' feelings of anxiety can slow down the completion of their final assignments (Sayeed et al., 2020; Aguilera-hermida, 2020; Sarigiannidis et al., 2020).

Facing students who procrastinate, he takes an approach by asking about student progress and guiding them on what to do. Meanwhile, according to the resource person's experience in dealing with students who engage in procrastination, this is because students often lose motivation, it is difficult to motivate due to the Covid-19 pandemic conditions where he cannot see the students' conditions and situations more closely, so students cannot be controlled and students experience changes. Form of learning, students need time to adapt to the pandemic situation. The supervisor said they had done this and helped the student by calling to ask about the problem. Some students were successfully contacted, and some were not. The root of the problem is that many of the 2018-2021 classes did not finish on time, due to changes in learning situations such as the absence of face-to-face contact between students and their supervisors. The findings in this research are in line with previous research; feeling lazy, anxious, and changing the method given in completing the final assignment has a big impact on students' delays in completing the final assignment (Magalhães et al., 2020; Galla et al., 2020; Pawlak et al., 2020).

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the discussion results, it was concluded that students working on their thesis encountered many obstacles, such as internal factors, namely self-control, self-efficacy, and motivation. Suggestions that can be given based on the results and conclusions of this research are as follows: For students. In the process of completing a thesis, students must learn to motivate themselves, control themselves, and develop high self-efficacy so that students can focus more on completing their thesis. For Further Researchers. This research indicates that the factors causing procrastination still occur frequently in the student environment. Therefore, research on causal factors needs further development to determine students' success in completing their final assignment/thesis.

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