

Original Research Article

Response and Coping among Master of Nursing Students at ITEKES Bali in Implementing Online Thesis Process during COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract: Background: The pandemic of Covid-19 is increasingly widespread and has not shown the decrease. Following up this situation, the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia through the Form Letter of the Minister of Education and Culture No. 4 of 2020 which concerning the Implementation of Educational Policies in an Emergency Period for the Spread of Corona Virus Disease Covid-19, urge for all learning processes to be carried out from home, including the implementation of school exams and eliminating national exams and competence tests. This also applies to the learning process at higher education, includes Master of Nursing Program at ITEKES Bali. **Purpose:** To determine the response and coping among master of nursing students at ITEKES Bali in implementing online thesis process during covid-19 pandemic. **Method:** This study employed descriptive qualitative study with explorative approach. The prime informants of this study were master of nursing students who undergoing thesis. The informants got informed consent and interview through video call. The data were analyzed by thematic analysis and the finding was presented in the form of narrative. **Result:** The thesis process which was carried out online went smoothly although there were various obstacles such as unstable connection during online guidance, deviations in perceptions and student understanding of the suggestions given. Another obstacle was the burden of other tasks that must be carried out by the informants considering that these informants are active workers, housewives and also members of the community. To overcome this obstacle, informants tried to manage their time as best as they could and asked for help from all parties such as family, friends and thesis supervisors. **Conclusion:** The conclusion of this study is the informants thought that the decision to carry out the thesis online is the right decision during the Covid-19 pandemic considering the high number of cases in various regions.

Keywords: Response, coping, thesis, master students, online.

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INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 is caused by Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). Most people infected Covid-19 virus will experience mild to moderate respiratory illness and require special care. Those with medical problems such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, and cancer are more susceptible to serious complications (WHO, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic was declared a global emergency on March 11, 2020 by the World Health Organization (WHO) and has spread to almost all parts of the world, including Indonesia. Indonesia, which has a relatively huge population,

requires good countermeasures to prevent the spread of this virus. The Indonesian government is taking decisive actions to reduce the spread of this disease, such as large-scale social restrictions and self-isolation. This is also applied to the world of education using distance or online learning methods (Gubernur Bali, 2020),(Kemendikbud RI, 2020). Master of Nursing ITEKES Bali is one of the programs that carry out online lectures. This includes all the lecture processes, including the preparation and examination of the thesis. The thesis process is a very important process in determining the graduation of master nursing students. This requires students' attention and perseverance in carrying out the preparation process, both in preparing

the thesis framework and providing guidance with supervisors. Social distancing means that guidance and exams must also be carried out online. It should well preparedly include the facilities and infrastructure; it will cause various obstacles that can hinder the completion of this student's thesis. Researchers know that there are several obstacles faced by students both in the process of compiling, guidance and online thesis examination processes. This requires deeper research to explore the problems experienced by students during the preparation and examination of theses and how students respond and cope with this process. This is what motivates the researchers to carry out this research.

OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH SETTING

This research conducted at Institute of Technology and Health Bali. This educational institution has 2 faculties, namely the faculty of health and the faculty of technology. There are more than 1000 students who are currently carrying out their education at this campus. Institute of Technology and Health Bali is located in the Renon village of Denpasar. The location of this campus is strategic and downtown which is an excellent place to study. In addition, the educational facilities and infrastructure provided by the

campus are also very adequate and able to expedite the educational process. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, all teaching and learning activities on this campus, both the classroom and practical laboratory were carried out with a face-to-face method, guided by lecturers who are teaching subjects and academic supervisors. After the social distancing policy began in March 2020, all learning activities were carried out online. This lecture process is included the completion of final assignment for master of nursing students at ITEKES Bali. This is a new experience for students doing the thesis process so that it brings out various obstacles that require good problem-solving coping mechanisms from the students and all parties involved in this process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Characteristic of the Informants

The prime respondent's characteristics include name, age, gender, education, occupation, while for supporting respondent's characteristics include name, age, gender, education and occupation. There were 11 informants included in this study consisting of 7 master of nursing students who are undergoing the thesis process, 2 informants from ITEKES Bali Structural officers, 1 thesis supervisor and 1 person who in charge in Master of Nursing Program.

Table 1: Characteristics of Prime Informants

Name/Code	Age	Gender	Education	Accupation
R001	40	Female	Bachelor	Government Officer
R002	41	Female	Bachelor	Government Officer
R003	27	Female	Bachelor	Self-employed
R004	33	Female	Bachelor	Self-employed
R005	26	Female	Bachelor	Self-employed
R006	36	Female	Bachelor	Government Officer
R007	30	Male	Bachelor	Government Officer

The data above shows that most of the prime informants are female and in the productive working age range. The findings of research showed that apart from having to do routine household work, the prime informants are also working as health workers and

educators in government and private health institutions. In addition, prime informants must carry out their duty as housewives and community members, especially if there are traditional religious ceremonies.

Table 2: Characteristics of Supporting Informants

Code	Age	Gender	Education	Accupation	Explanation
P001	47	Male	Doctoral	Lecturer	Thesis Councelor
P002	42	Male	Bachelor	Vice Rector	Structural Officer
P003	41	Male	S2	Head of Faculty	Structural Officer
P004	31	Female	S2	Lecturer	PC in Master Degree of Nursing Program

This data shows that the supporting informants have competence in accordance with the research objectives. This enables more accurate data to be obtained when data triangulation is performed.

Perception of Master Degree of Nursing Program toward Online Thesis Process During the Covid-19 Pandemic

In general, the prime informants in this study stated that their perception of online thesis process during the Covid-19 pandemic was the right decision considering the high incidence of Covid-19 cases. In particular, these informants conveyed the advantages experienced during the process of this thesis, namely in terms of managing the time with the work carried out, but that was the possibility of losses, namely the prime

informants felt it would be better if the process was carried out face-to-face.

This is as stated by the informants below:

"In my opinion, this online thesis process is appropriate because of the pandemic and this is also in accordance with government policies. I feel more comfortable and easier to manage the time between work and the thesis process because it can be done anytime and anywhere, but sometimes it's difficult for me to understand the explanations of my supervisor because we don't meet face-to-face" (R001,R003)

"I feel that this online thesis is more efficient in managing my time, because we don't have to go to campus and I think the online thesis process is quite effective, depending on the role of students and supervisors. When compared to the face-to-face thesis process, face-to-face is more optimal because we can interact, but online theses are the same if done seriously, the results will be as good, in my opinion" (R004, R007)

The statements of these prime informants are also supported by several supporting informants below.

"If we could choose, maybe we will do this thesis process face-to-face, but this is already a government policy to prevent the spread of Covid-19 transmission. We know that there will be losses that we feel, for example, unstable connection often occur during the process and there are misperceptions when given input. But of course there are advantages, namely that the counseling time is more flexible and students can be mentored while working" (P003, P004)

This was also confirmed by two other supporting informants who stated that it was true that the face-to-face thesis process would be more optimal than the online thesis process, but because of the pandemic, this thesis process has to be carried out online.

"Sometimes it's a bit difficult to guide students online because we don't see the student's response directly, whether they understand the input we give or not, especially if the network is constrained, it's often disrupted. But if you look at the benefits, of course there is a more flexible time between guidance and work. Besides that, in a pandemic situation, like it or not, we have to be able to proceed in any situation, including this online thesis process" (P001, P002)

In 2021, the Covid-19 pandemic has entered 2.5 years. This is still happening all over the world, including Indonesia. Our government has carried out an online learning process as an effort to prevent the spread of Covid-19. Form letter of the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia No. 4 of 2020 concerning the Implementation of Educational Policies in an Emergency Period for the

Spread of Corona Virus Disease Covid-19, urge for all learning processes to be carried out from home online. This online learning process also includes learning at the higher education level, including practical arrangements and the completion of the final project (Kemendikbud RI, 2020).

Obsctacle (Responses) of Masters of Nursing Students during the Online Thesis Process

The implementation of the online thesis has possibility of the emergence of various obstacles and problems, both in the guidance and also the existence of network constraints. Most of the prime informants stated that the main problem faced was difficult to understand the advice and input given by the supervisor during direct guidance because they could not interact directly and sometimes there were network disturbances so that the guidance could be interrupted.

"Honestly, I'm a bit slow to understand input and suggestions from the supervisor, even though the supervisors have tried to direct and provide improvements to my thesis, especially if it's done online, so I can't see the supervisor's response and what it means. Moreover, I live outside the city so I often have network problems and do not follow the guidance."(R002, R005)

"I can still follow the guidance process, but sometimes I collide with household and office assignments, so it's often difficult to manage my time. I often feel that I have not been maximal in doing my thesis" (R006)

When conducting interview whether the thesis process causes stress or health problems, most of the prime informants said that the thesis process itself is not too stressful because it can be followed well even though it is carried out online. Sometimes these informants feel bored and burdened when they have to manage time between office work, household and thesis completion. Especially if there are social events and office tasks. Some of the informants experienced pain during the thesis process, which further slowed the progress of completing their thesis. This is in accordance with research conducted by Prawanti and Sumarni about Obstacles to Online Learning During the Covid-19 Pandemic (Prawanti *et al*, 2020). This is as stated by the informants below.

"If the thesis process itself is reasonable, we can follow it. Sometimes what makes me bored, stressed and burdened when everything accumulates at one time between household, office assignments and the deadline for completing the thesis. Moreover, there are social activities and office tasks that require us to be present, so the stress increases, (R003, R006)

"I was sick during the thesis process, it is not because of the thesis but because my condition was weak, so I had to rest. At that time, I was able to follow the thesis process but it was not optimal. Fortunately, my supervisor was very nice, so I was given an extension

time and special guidance following my lack of guidance.” (R001, R002)

When the interview was carried out, it was more specifically about the problems faced by the prime informants related to the thesis process. Some informants said that they found obstacles when submitting topics that had to be changed many times so that they had discouraged them. In addition, there were disagreements between one supervisor and another. However, with intensive communication and coordination all these problems can be resolved properly. Regarding the guidance process, from sending guidance materials to receiving corrections, on average, it can be done in 3-4 days. This is as stated by the informants below

“I found obstacles related to thesis problem. At the beginning of the topic submission, I had to change the topic several times because it was considered less interesting for research even though I had been trying to find the one that I thought was the most interesting.

But it's okay; maybe the supervisors have a better analysis and are more suitable as research topics.” (R001)

“At that time, I received very different advice from one supervisor to another. I tried to include everything but it's contradicting so it's out of sync. “I was confused whether I dared to convey to the two supervisors. I asked for time for the supervisors to be able to guide together, fortunately, the asymmetry of the suggestions could be resolved properly.” (R005)

The statements of the prime informants are supported by the statements of the supporting informants below:

“As supervisors, we always try to facilitate online tutoring students with various guidance media such as WAG, Zoom, email and other media that we agree on. The situation experienced by students is varied. There are those who could quickly catch what we mean, but there are also those who are very slow, but we are trying to guide them so that the target for completing this thesis could in appropriate time. There was a student who had not been mentored for a long time because he was sick and had not made any repairs; we had to contact him personally to find out what problems he was facing.” (P001)

“In general, we try to monitor the progress of the student any time by monitoring the class reports and also coordinating with all supervisors about the obstacles they face. It is true that there are some obstacles face by the students but they are still reasonable” (P003, P004)

The findings of this study are in accordance with the results of research conducted by (Andri A,

2020) entitle Barriers, Solutions and Hopes: Online Learning during the Covid-19 Pandemic Period. The research found that the obstacles experienced are internet connection problems, delays in sending tasks due to poor connection. Research conducted by (Agusmanto H *et al*, 2020) which was conducted among students qualitatively found that the obstacles faced by students were still fundamental. These obstacles are often constrained by the internet network and lack of understanding of the materials and teaching materials provided online. (Anugrahana, 2020), (Hutauruk *et al*, 2020), (Aryawan *et al*, 2017).

Coping Mechanisms and Expectations of Master Nursing Students during the Online Thesis Process

Most of the prime informants in this study experienced but the obstacles faced were fundamental and not directly related to the thesis process. The perceived obstacles are more due to the burden of other tasks that must be carried out when carrying out the thesis process. This happens because most of the informants are active workers, housewives and community members who have to carry out other duties and responsibility other than as formal workers and students. To response to this obstacle, most of the informants used individual coping mechanisms by trying to manage their time as well as possible, including overtime at night and asking for help from related parties such as family and friends.

“I realized that during the thesis process it took time and thought, especially since I was not able to work optimally because of the burden of other tasks. To avoid stressed, I try to manage the time as best I can, even staying up late into the night. Trying to finish office task as much as possible in the office so that I can get home to do my thesis.” (R002, R005, R006)

“I try to organize my work and schedules as best I can. Fortunately, for household, all families members help me, including helping with several thesis tasks, such as carry me up to the research seeting, assisting with documentation as well as administrative support. In addition, college friends are also very helpful, especially discussions about topics and research methods that we are taking. I also ask for help from friends in the office, especially if it is related to health programs.” (R001, R004)

“I try to finish every office assignment on time so I can focus on my thesis. I tried to understand advice of the supervisor and immediately revised it after being given the advice so I didn't forget it. If there is a problem I always consult with my supervisor and friends. Fortunately, the supervisors are always ready to facilitate and help us during the process of this thesis.” (R003, R007)

When conducting in depth interviews about the expectations of the informants about the thesis process that has been carried out so far and for further

improvement of the thesis process, most of the informants stated that the thesis process carried out so far at ITEKES Bali has been going well. Campus has tried to facilitate the needs of students well. The supervisors were also very helpful in the process of this thesis. Informants hope that this good quality can be maintained and continuously improved. The informants hoped that the campus provide guidance and socialization about the methods and mechanisms for writing thesis, writing manuscripts and publications to complete students' final assignments. This is as stated by the informant below:

"So far, the thesis process that I feel has been quite smooth. I faced obstacles but we could overcome them. So far, the campus has greatly facilitated us both in terms of providing facilities and infrastructure, including libraries. The supervisors are very helpful for us in completing this thesis. Likewise from the management of the study program. We are frequently monitored on the progress and progress of our thesis."(R002,R006)

"We thank you for being facilitated during this thesis process. It's been very good and smooth. We only hope that this need to be maintained and improved, especially in the efforts and ways of writing the latest thesis, writing manuscripts and also about scientific publications. In general, it has been very smooth, we have gone through this process and so far everything has proceeded according to the specified schedule."(R001,R006)

The statements of the prime informants are supported by the statements of the supporting informants below:

"Campus is trying to give its best to facilitate and help all the problems faced by the students during this thesis process. We always monitor the progress of thesis progress from proposals, findings and also the thesis itself. We have made a schedule for the range of exam advances so that supervisors and students have an idea of when to complete this thesis. For the facilities, we already have offline and online libraries that can be accessed by students. We hope that all of this will facilitate the thesis process. We also continue to do improvements in every way to maintain the quality of our graduates in the future." (P002, P004)

The finding of this study is in accordance with the theory stated by (Keliat, 2016) that coping mechanisms are ways that individuals do in solving problems, adapting to change, and responding to threatening situations. These mechanisms can be grouped into adaptive coping mechanisms and maladaptive coping mechanisms (Stuart, 2016), (Budiana K, 2016). Adaptive coping mechanisms tend to be constructive and maladaptive coping mechanisms tend to be destructive. A person's coping mechanism is influenced by various factors both from within the individual and from outside. These coping mechanisms

can be short term and long term. This short-term coping mechanism can be in the form of activities as a temporary escape such as playing music, watching TV and recreation. This can also be in the form of substitute activities such as being active in organizational activities and even taking sedatives. Meanwhile, the long-term mechanism tends to cover its identity to the wider community. In addition to these two mechanisms, there are coping mechanisms in the form of ego defense that can be realized in the form of compensation, denial, displacement, dissociation, identification, intellectualization, introjection, projection, isolation, regression, rationalization, fantasy, symbolization and repression.

CONCLUSION

The finding of this study found that all informants in this study thought that the decision to carry out the thesis online was the right decision during the Covid-19 pandemic considering the high number of cases in various regions. The thesis process was carried out quite smoothly, although various obstacles were found, such as network disturbances during online guidance, misperceptions and student understanding of the suggestions and inputs given. Another obstacle outside the thesis process but also affecting the thesis process is the burden of other tasks that must be carried out by the informants considering that these informants are active workers, housewives and also members of the community. To overcome this situation, the informants tried to manage their time as best they can and asked for help from all parties such as family, friends and thesis supervisors.

SUGESSTIONS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The findings showed that the thesis process carried out online by master of nursing students was good and running smoothly. This needs to be maintained and continuously improved so that the quality of graduates could be maintained. In this occasion, the researcher would like to thank all those who have helped in the implementation of this research; hopefully the results of this research can be used as a source of data in the preparation of online learning programs during the pandemic, especially in higher education level.

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