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THESIS ACCOMPLISHMENT AMONG HOSPITALITY UNDERGRADUATES: EXAMINING THE INFLUENCE OF INFORMATION SEEKING, READING COMPREHENSION AND WRITING SKILLS, AND SUPERVISION

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Abstract:

This study aims to examine the relationship between key academic competencies namely information seeking, reading comprehension and writing skills, and supervision—and their influence on thesis accomplishment among undergraduate hospitality students. It further identifies the most significant predictor contributing to successful thesis completion. A quantitative cross-sectional research design was employed using a structured, closed-ended questionnaire. Data were collected from 80 hospitality undergraduate students and multiple regression analysis was conducted to analyse the usable data. The findings revealed that information seeking, reading comprehension and writing skills, and supervision are all positively associated with thesis accomplishment. Among these, reading comprehension and writing skills emerged as the strongest predictor of successful thesis completion. This study offers valuable insights for academic advisors, faculty members, and curriculum developers by highlighting the academic competencies that most influence students' ability to complete their thesis. These findings may inform targeted interventions or support mechanisms to enhance thesis outcomes among hospitality students. This research contributes to the limited body of knowledge on undergraduate thesis success within the hospitality education context, offering a focused analysis on the predictors of thesis accomplishment.

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Information Seeking, Reading Comprehension, Supervision, Thesis Accomplishment, Undergraduates, Writing Skill

Introduction

An undergraduate is a university or college student who has yet to earn a first degree, often a bachelor's degree (Miller et al., 2023). Universities offer a variety of academic courses to meet the needs of the country's aspiring professionals as the third level of education and one of the most prominent institutions of higher education in Malaysia. Commonly, the undergraduate students will have a final year project or thesis to mark the end of their studies in their final semester. The thesis required students to engage in comprehensive study, critical analysis, and problem solving while offering them an opportunity to investigate a specific aspect of the hospitality industry in detail. Consequently, students must acquire critical reading and writing competencies. Additionally, students must acquire proficiency in research skills. All of these would let them carry out their studies with confidence and independence (Hoon et al., 2019). As they advance from one semester to the next, their research skills will continue to improve, whether through independent discovery, supervision from supervisors or during seminars and workshops.

Academic writing is a general term that refers to the various forms and styles of rhetorical prose that are used for research communication in a variety of academic fields and widely identified as a crucial skill for students to improve their educational performance at university level (Anderson & Cuesta-Medina, 2019). Many studies have look into the perspectives of theses writing by postgraduate students (Ghanbari et al., 2018; Hoon et al., 2019; Ooi et al., 2022). These previous researchers highlighted that academic writing is usually recognised as one of the most difficult tasks to complete for postgraduate students. However, it is evident that there is a notable scarcity of research focused on the undergraduate level, specifically addressing thesis accomplishment.

This study focuses on investigating the undergraduate thesis accomplishment among hospitality students. The area of hospitality and tourism stands out as a growing and exciting industry based on the pursuit of excellence in customer service, management, and tourism, which attracting a substantial number of students who pursue this field of study at colleges and universities worldwide (Mensah et al., 2020). Specifically, this study aims to 1) determine the relationship between information seeking and thesis accomplishment among undergraduate hospitality students' theses, 2) investigate the relationship between reading comprehension and writing skills and thesis accomplishment among undergraduate hospitality students' theses, 3) examine the relationship between supervision and thesis accomplishment among undergraduate hospitality students' theses, and 4) identify the best predictor of thesis accomplishment among undergraduate hospitality students' theses.

On top of that, the authors believed that the findings of this present study will contribute to both theoretical aspects that are of interest to academics and practical aspects, indicating relevance to students and the thesis accomplishment in general. For instance, investigating undergraduate thesis accomplishment is significant academically because it contributes useful

information to academic research, informing educational procedures and guidelines aimed at improving student success in higher education. Apart from that, understanding the factors that influence thesis completion allows institutions to develop interventions and support systems to help students access the thesis-writing process more effectively, thereby improving their educational results and academic experiences. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the thesis accomplishment predictor among undergraduates majoring in hospitality.

The rest of the paper is structured as follows. The next section provides literature on the brief explanation of thesis accomplishment, followed by the three main variables (information seeking, reading comprehension and writing skills, and supervision) discussed in this study. Subsequently, the study's hypotheses and the proposed conceptual framework are illustrated. The methodological approach and the data collection process are then summarised, and the results of hypothesis testing are presented. Finally, the paper concludes by discussing the implications of the findings, acknowledging its limitations, and stressing the potential recommendations for future research.

Literature Review

Overview of Thesis Accomplishment

A thesis can be referred to as a study on an exacting topic in which innovative research has been done, presented by students, or as a proposition stated for consideration, particularly one to be discussed and proved or maintained against opposing views (Clewes, 1996). One of the main requirements for students to complete their college education is the completion of a thesis. Generally, a thesis refers to a study on an exact topic in which innovative research has been done and presented by the student or a proposition stated for consideration, particularly one to be discussed and proved or maintained against opposing views (Field & de Neufville, 2021). It involves the successful completion of an in-depth research project or dissertation, usually conducted in the final year of their degree program. Sitompul and Anditasari (2022) argued that writing an academic work is not an easy task, for students experience challenges such as identifying research interests, collecting and analysing data, reporting findings, developing discussion, and writing implications and recommendations. As a result, completing a thesis can be a challenging process for many graduate students.

Information seeking

Most academic writings require a critique of the prior and relevant body of writings (publications) as an essential holistic feature on a specific subject matter. This sort of literary enquiry is critical in academic writing to ensure that existing knowledge is discussed to grasp their convergences and divergencies logically (Pautasso, 2019). According to Xie (2000), information users use their general cognitive skills and their knowledge to represent their problems or tasks, to establish a set of subgoals to fulfil the overall goals, and to develop techniques and strategies to seek the required information. Kuniasih et al. (2018) stated that search engines serve as platforms to track numerous resources needed by students and their dependency on it emphasises the importance of retrieval technique to use them. Some of these information-seeking strategies include searching, tracking, selecting, comparing, acquiring, consulting, and exploring.

In the process of information seeking and need resolution, research skills may interfere positively or negatively with an information activity and may create barriers. Many scholars have discussed these issues extensively. For instance, Chigbu et al. (2023) highlighted students at all levels (undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral levels) require skills to locate, synthesise and present literature in logically argued and written forms as part of their theses or dissertation writing, whereas Adedeji (2023) mentioned that information resources are highly needed when conducting research, which is an indication that the ability to use information resources like search engines could influence research skills.

As noted by Kugley et al. (2017), information needs arise when there is a gap in individuals' knowledge, leading to the identification of a knowledge gap. Besides, a previous study by Gabriela (2023) claimed that the information-seeking environment for these students is dynamic and complex. In general, students tend to be initially overconfident regarding the existence of information and finding the information, and this overconfidence sometimes manifests itself as overestimation of their familiarity with the subject field or of the refinedness of the information needed. Noteworthy, students at all academic levels (undergraduate, postgraduate, and doctoral) necessitate the ability to identify, synthesise, and present literature in logically structured for their thesis or dissertation writing (Chigbu et al., 2023). Therefore, this discourse leads to the formulation of the following hypothesis, as articulated below:

H1: There is a relationship between information seeking and thesis accomplishment.

Reading Comprehension And Writing Skills

In thesis writing, writing skills and reading comprehension are crucial not only to the postgraduate students but also important to the undergraduates. A number of studies reported that there are high proportions of students who struggle to complete their studies within the specific time given (Zainal & Ismail, 2009). Many factors contribute to the pressures of undertaking and coping with the requirements of a postgraduate thesis, such as lack of writing skills, using the appropriate vocabularies and reading and comprehending academic texts in a critical manner.

The main purpose of reading is to explain the meaning of the text read (Türkben & Gündeğer, 2021). Meanwhile, writing is a basic skill included in the expressive sphere of a language and forms the last stage of effective language learning, which is acquired through education similar to reading (Aktaş et al., 2023). Indeed, reading and writing are closely related. Kemper (2016) simplified that reading helps to improve writing skills and writing is influenced through reading. In other words, the more the students read, the better their writing skills. It is important for the students to understand the technique in academic reading and writing in completing their theses.

Research has shown that students who read extensively are likely to achieve good academic performance (Mwangi & Bwire, 2020; Hassan et al., 2021). Furthermore, students with a strong foundation in reading can influence their writing. Consequently, students struggled in writing their theses, such as difficulties in explaining their research background, constructing the literature review, and understanding research methodology. As opposed by Tiwiyanti et al. (2022) in their study, the major problems occurred during writing research proposals, especially for the novice writers. The research proposal is usually their first experience with any scientific writing. Thus, they must learn both the concept of scientific writing and the field of study of their research topic. Previous study has look into the importance of reading and

writing as the complementary language abilities that associated with their reading comprehension and motivation to write (Aktaş et al., 2023). As a result, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H2: There is a relationship between reading comprehension and writing skills and thesis accomplishment.

Supervision

Supervision is a well-defined interpersonal relationship between the thesis supervisors and their students (Bazrafkan et al., 2019). A supervisor is designated to assist the student's development in terms of their research project (Harwood & Petrić, 2018). Moreover, effective supervision is an essential component for the success and quality of students in any institution of higher learning (Yende, 2021). The supervisors are expected to train students to gain competence in areas such as specialist skills, generalist skills, self-reliance skills, and group/team skills (Light et al., 2011). As for the undergraduate thesis supervision, supervisors' diagnostic skills can be defined as their ability to judge students' research skills (Agricola et al., 2020). Research supervisors need to be sensitive to all the differences between students, including the level and amount of supervisor support that has to be adapted to students' needs and the nature of the required support will differ from student to student (Engebretson et al., 2008). Indeed, supervisors clearly support impacts that can contribute to students' research and innovation efforts (Fan et al., 2019), and this support is one of the predictors of student satisfaction (Dericks et al., 2019). Concerning this, the communication between educators and students underlines the significance of enhancing the academic success of all students while addressing their particular requirements (Karakose et al., 2023a).

Supervision meetings offer opportunities for supervisor-student interaction; these meetings give supervisors the opportunity to diagnose students' research skills and to adapt their support to students' needs (De Kleijn et al., 2014). In accordance with Yu et al. (2018), students tend to be more responsible and independent in regulating their learning than other students when the supervisors are more autonomy-supportive to the students. According to Mensah et al. (2020), supervisors who demonstrate care for students' learning and well-being significantly enhance their academic achievements. Moreover, Yirci et al. (2023) described that mentoring assists students in acquiring knowledge, skills, and self-confidence along with enhancing their professional and personal competencies. Besides, a supervisory relationship not only is a matter of personal connection but also dramatically affects the cultivation of students' academic research ability, achievement of personal academic goals, and realisation of the teaching and research goals of schools and supervisors (Wu et al., 2024). Empirically, previous studies highlighted that undergraduate's supervision is much less studied in existing research than PhD supervision (Hardwood & Petrić, 2020; Strebel et al., 2021). Apparently, this oversight in the literature requires in-depth comprehension (Mårtensson & Söderström, 2025), which led to the following hypothesis as stated below:

H3: There is a relationship between supervision and thesis accomplishment.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework in Figure 1 illustrates the relationship between the factors affecting undergraduates' thesis accomplishment majoring in hospitality at UiTM Puncak Alam, Malaysia. The factors (independent variables) shown in the model are information seeking, reading comprehension and writing skills, and supervision. Meanwhile, the dependent variable is thesis accomplishment.

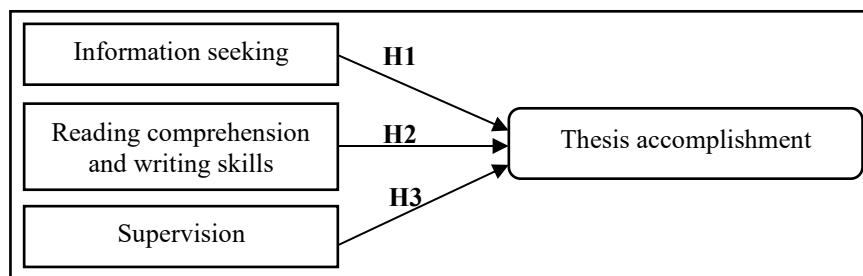


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Methodology

Research Design

In this study, the quantitative research approach was used to gather all the information related to finding the factor that affects hospitality undergraduates' thesis accomplishments. The researchers used descriptive research as the method to collect the data of the study. Besides that, this study uses a correlational research design, as it assists researchers in establishing a relationship between two variables that are closely related.

Population and Sampling

Based on this study, the population is hospitality students in their final semester of undergraduate studies, involving several programmes of the Faculty of Hotel and Tourism Management, which are Culinary Arts Management (HM245), Hotel Management (HM240), Tourism Management (HM241), Foodservice Management (HM242), and Foodservice Management with Entrepreneurship (HM252). In this study, the researchers have gathered a total of 80 respondents through convenience sampling.

Instrumentation

This study utilised close-ended structured questionnaires to gather the primary data. The questionnaire was modified from the previous studies by Zahari et al. (2014). The questionnaire was adapted with modifications to align with the context of undergraduate thesis completion. Expert validation was sought to ensure content relevance and clarity. The questionnaire was divided into five sections. Section A focuses on the socioeconomic background of the respondents. The next three sections were asked regarding the difficulty of each variable. Sections B, C, and D addressed the information-seeking challenges students faced, evaluated the challenges associated with reading comprehension and writing skills during the thesis process, and focused on supervision obstacles. Whereas Section E examined the thesis accomplishment. Each of the questions for Sections B, C, and D was measured by using the five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 – most difficult to 5 – the easiest, while questions in Section E ranged from "strongly disagree (1)" to "strongly agree (5)".

Data Collection

This study was conducted in accordance with ethical guidelines for research involving human participants. Ethical approval was obtained from the Faculty's Research Ethics Committee (Reference No: FPHP/FREC/486/2023). Prior to participation, all respondents were informed about the purpose of the study and their rights, and informed consent was obtained. The researchers performed the data collection by distributing the survey questions to the

respondents online through Google Forms. Respondents were required to complete the self-administered questionnaire at their convenience without the researchers' interference. The distribution of the questionnaire, sorting of the completed questionnaires, and analysis of the collected data took place for around three months. Out of 220 hospitality students, 80 respondents actively participated in this survey, which represented an adequate sample of the population. The researchers then analysed the usable data using SPSS.

Reliability Test

Table 1 presents the reliability results. The reliability analysis was performed to assess the internal consistency of the items. The results showed preferable alpha values ranging from 0.827 to 0.933 (Hair et al., 2010), indicating all items were retained.

Table 1: Reliability Results

Dimensions	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Information seeking	10	0.933
Reading comprehension and writing skills	10	0.932
Supervision	5	0.827
Thesis accomplishment	7	0.928

Results

Demographic Profiles

Based on the results in Table 2, the average ages that were collected were between 19 and 40 years old. From 80 respondents, the majority of respondents were young adults (21 to 30 years old), with 96.1%; followed by teenagers (20 years old and below) with 2.6%; and the least were adults (30 years and above) with 1.3%. The gender distribution for the female respondents is higher than that for the male respondents. Among 80 respondents, female respondents make up 53.8% (n = 43), while male respondents appear to be 46.3% (n = 37) of the total respondents. Based on the result of the survey, the respondents gathered are majority from Tourism Management at 32.5% (n = 26). Then, 22 respondents were from Foodservice Management at 27.5%, followed by respondents from Culinary Arts Management, which is equivalent to 14 respondents at 17.5% of total respondents. The other 12 respondents are from Hotel Management at 15%, and lastly, 6 respondents are from Foodservice Management with Entrepreneurship as the minority at 7.5% of total respondents.

Table 2: Demographic Profiles of Respondents

Variables	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	≤20	2	2.6
	21-30	77	96.1
	>30	1	1.3
Gender	Male	37	46.3
	Female	43	53.8
Programs	Tourism Management	26	32.5
	Foodservice Management	22	27.5
	Culinary Arts Management	14	17.5
	Foodservice Management with Entrepreneurship	6	7.5
	Hotel Management	12	15.0

Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple linear regression was performed to examine the relationship between the study's variables and identify the main contributor to the undergraduates' thesis accomplishments. Preliminary analyses were conducted to ensure that the assumptions of normality, linearity, multicollinearity, and homoscedasticity were not violated. The results indicated acceptable levels within the threshold (VIF values < 5, normally distributed residuals), ensuring the appropriateness of the regression model. The R^2 value of 0.385 indicates that approximately 38.5% of the variance in thesis accomplishment can be explained by the predictor variables. While this suggests a moderate effect size, it also highlights the presence of other potential influencing factors not examined in this study. Table 3 displays the summary of the regression analysis.

Table 3: Result of Multiple Regression Analysis

Items	B	SE B	β
Constant	1.468	.434	
Information Seeking	.259	.182	.236
Reading Comprehension and Writing Skills	.411	.185	.379
Supervision	.070	.122	.058

Note: $R^2 = 0.385$, * $p < .001$

Table 4: Summary of Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis	Result (Sig.)	Remark
H1: There is a positive relationship between information seeking and thesis accomplishment	<.001	Supported
H2: There is a positive relationship between reading comprehension and writing skills and thesis accomplishment	<.001	Supported
H3: There is a positive relationship between supervision and thesis accomplishment	<.001	Supported

Researchers analysed all variables simultaneously and showed different results. The results showed that all of the variables have a positive relationship with the thesis accomplishment. At the same time, these results proved the hypotheses statements made earlier in this study. Table 4 summarised the hypotheses testing and indicated that H1, H2 and H3 were all supported. Altogether, the regression analysis demonstrated that reading comprehension and writing skills are the best predictors of the hospitality undergraduates' thesis accomplishments as compared to seeking information and supervision.

Discussion

The main objective of this study is to identify the relationship between the study's variables and the main predictor affecting the undergraduates' thesis accomplishments. By referring to Table 3, the results show that all three independent variables (information seeking, reading comprehension and writing skills, and supervision) have a significant relationship with thesis accomplishment. Therefore, all hypotheses of the study, H1, H2, and H3, were supported. This study provides strong evidence to support the notion that reading comprehension and writing skills have influenced thesis accomplishments among the hospitality undergraduates.

Based on the analysis, reading comprehension and writing skills are shown to be the main predictor of the undergraduates' thesis accomplishments ($\beta = .379, p > 0.01$) as shown in Table 3. The researcher reported that students are able to understand the concepts and research terms while completing their thesis write-up. According to Hoon et al. (2019), students required these two important skills (reading and writing) to help them deliver smoothly in their thesis. Nevertheless, the students find it difficult to argue findings in an analytical manner that generates new knowledge and insight. This finding aligns with the previous research by Ooi et al. (2021), where academic writing is usually recognised as one of the most difficult tasks to complete for the students. Other than that, the student's English literacy could be a barrier for low performance and comprehension on their research writing skills. Ghazali et al. (2024) asserted that the most difficult language skill mastered by students is writing skills. This challenge is compounded by the fact that many students lack adequate practice and exposure to academic writing conventions. Besides, the students were able to interpret their findings and analysis, indicating that they understand their research topic and gradually improved their reading and writing skills. It is imperative for universities to include research methodology and writing courses for the students to provide them with sufficient research skills and good writing theses. By doing so, institutions can equip students with the necessary tools to articulate their ideas effectively and contribute meaningfully to their fields of study. Thus, academic writing skills must be integrated throughout the graduate studies as a whole, extending from proposing new projects to sharing their research findings with the larger academic community (Chakma et al., 2021).

From the results shown in Table 3, information seeking appears to be the second predictor of thesis accomplishments ($\beta = .236, p > 0.01$). The research findings indicate that when people are looking for information in a project, they go through steps like searching, choosing, and evaluating information. In this study, the respondents found it easy to access overall information required for their research through web-based search engines. Aligned with findings by Kurniasih et al. (2018), most of the respondents used search engines to find references for college assignments and thesis writing during their learning activities. According to scholars like Chigbu et al. (2023), the ability to conduct an explicit and robust literature review by students, scholars or scientists is critical in producing excellent journal articles, academic theses, academic dissertations or working papers. In this modern day, students are anticipated to possess digital competency in learning activities, including utilising digital media for information retrieval and knowledge sharing throughout the education system (Karakose et al., 2023b). Additionally, Adedeji (2023) asserted that information users utilise cognitive skills and knowledge to represent their problems, establish subgoals, and develop strategies to seek the required information. Information-seeking strategies encompass searching, tracking, selecting, comparing, acquiring, consulting, and exploring (Gabriela, 2023). Furthermore, this study revealed that respondents were able to retrieve relevant and recent sources of references for their studies, such as research articles and books to be cited in their theses. This result was supported by Xie et al. (2025), which stated that students with higher academic self-efficacy are more inclined to utilise learning strategies, including information integration, critical thinking, and self-adjustment of the studying process. In accord, students' ability to strategically search for referencing sources significantly impacts their learning strategies and research skills, which then leads to their academic success. Thus, their capability in information seeking will enhance resilience and adaptability in responding to their thesis accomplishment.

Although supervision was the least predictor, it is a significant factor for the students to accomplish their thesis systematically ($\beta = .058$, $p > 0.01$). While supervision was found to be statistically significant ($\beta = .058$, $p < .05$), the beta coefficient indicates a very small effect size. This suggests that, although the relationship is unlikely to have occurred by chance, its practical influence on thesis accomplishment is limited. Therefore, the findings should be interpreted with caution, and the role of supervision may need to be examined further in conjunction with other variables or through qualitative inquiry to better understand its impact in a real-world educational context. The supervision relationship has a reciprocal effect where all interactions leave an impact on the development of a candidate competency (Arifin et al., 2025). It becomes evident that there is a meaningful connection between supervision and thesis accomplishment. Most of the respondents agree that getting research knowledge, support and assistance from the supervisor affects their thesis writing. On top of that, students are generally expected to further develop their independence or ability to work independently as they move from bachelor's to later levels of their education (Zackariasson & Magnusson, 2024). A study by Agricola et al. (2020) showed that the balance of supervisions and communication between supervisors and students helped in co-regulating students' learning processes. Besides, the results also highlighted that student found it easy to maintain good contact and relationships with the supervisors, which helped them to understand the research concept better and receive support from their supervisors. This is because students seek assistance from the experts in gaining knowledge, experience, and problem-solving abilities, especially in writing their thesis. These findings are further supported by Ali et al. (2022), who stated that supervisors can provide appropriate assistance, knowledge, counsel, and expertise, thereby improving employee motivation, confidence, and skills. A recent study involving undergraduate and graduate students at a Swedish university indicated that varying supervision styles yield distinct outcomes, where control-oriented supervision correlates with enhanced thesis quality and increased scientific curiosity, while supportive supervision is linked to timely completion but reduced scientific curiosity (Mårtensson & Söderström, 2025). Thus, students need supervisors early in the research field to help them find the right path of academic research (Wu et al., 2024). In other words, supervisors who work closely with their student simultaneously help them improve their thesis progress.

Conclusion and Implication

The dissertation or thesis is the last hurdle before a graduate student graduates, and it is also the hurdle that causes the most attrition of graduate students. A dissertation is a paper that a graduate student must produce within a few months, and it includes a number of processes, such as problem identification and validation, literature collection, data collection and analysis, and writing (Chang et al., 2022). In summary, this present study extends the understanding of measures that contribute to the hospitality undergraduates completing their theses. The results revealed that all three variables are significant predictors of thesis accomplishments. More precisely, the results imply that reading comprehension and writing skills are the major predictors of the undergraduates' thesis accomplishments, followed by the students' capability in information seeking and the lecturers' supervision. This contributes to the existing literature on factors that drive the undergraduates' efficiency in completing their thesis.

Apparently, this study did not address the students' background variables, such as gender and the programmes, which was a limitation of this study. It is suggested to expand the study population to include different background variables in future research. Other than that, this study focused on a single institution, which led future scholars to investigate different

universities within related faculties or programs for a deeper understanding. The comparisons could provide an alternative point of view on the efficacy of students' thesis accomplishment. This study quantitatively identified significant factors affecting undergraduate thesis completion. However, future research should qualitatively investigate the specific challenges students encounter in distinct academic programs and ascertain the exact forms of support necessary to improve their performance. In addition, it is important to note that students' academic progress is not only influenced by personal factors but also by external factors. Therefore, it is worthwhile to investigate whether the influence of other external factors, such as social factors (family and friends) and institutional factors (environment and amenities), will contribute to finishing writing the thesis.

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