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MOTIVATION-REGULATION STRATEGIES OF FEMALE AND MALE INDONESIAN EFL UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN THESIS WRITING

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Abstract: Self-regulation constitutes students' ability to maintain and manage their efforts to attain specific goals, significantly influencing motivation for thesis writing. Whereas motivation-regulation strategies are correlated with completion rates, a significant gap remains in measuring differences across gender in their use among undergraduate students. Therefore, this study employed a mixed-method study to discover motivation-regulation strategies across gender perspectives and how they used strategies in writing their thesis. The participants of this study were 30 male and 30 female undergraduate students of English Education at Sanata Dharma University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. This study utilized a closed-ended questionnaire on motivation-regulation strategies and a semi-structured interview to gather the data. The first finding revealed that the undergraduate students were conscious of motivation-regulation strategies: self-

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consequences, avoidance goals, approach goals, situational interest, and environmental strategy. Further, the second finding indicated a significant difference between female and male students using motivation-regulation strategies at .000 with $p < .05$. The results implied that gender perspectives affect the students using the motivation-regulation strategies.

Keywords: *female and male students, motivation-regulation strategies, thesis writing, undergraduate students*

INTRODUCTION

Possessing writing skills to convey ideas, such as background knowledge, mastery of diction, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills, is essential for writers (Mbato & Cendra, 2019). They must delve further into the problem to produce a more complex piece of writing. In writing, learners need to be trained to express their views critically and creatively to produce such work. Furthermore, many learners worldwide, including those in Indonesia, face formidable challenges regarding academic writing. The obstacles encompass insufficient materials, inadequate vocabulary, improper paragraph construction, poor topic selection, and weak conceptualization (Aini et al., 2022).

One of the challenges the students face in writing a thesis is their lack of strong self-belief in completing their assignments. Moreover, Hallberg and Olsson (2017) mentioned that flexible submission deadlines cause students to postpone their writing or, at worst, fail their studies. Students who graduate on time need less than or precisely four years to finish their studies and are considered successful in attaining their goals. On the other hand, students who do not graduate on time need more than four years to finish their studies (Diasti & Mbato, 2020).

According to Andriani and Mbato (2021), gender differences become one factor affecting students' language learning, as students have different linguistic styles. For instance, females excel in learning, are more social, use more strategies, and prefer intuition and emotion over perception and reason, making them more effective in language acquisition than males (Ehrman & Oxford, 1989; Kearney & Ellis, 1994). Furthermore, females are more motivated than males to learn a foreign

language. On the other hand, males learn and perform better when they are enthusiastic and responsible. Therefore, those differences can lead to different strategies for each gender and influence their attitude towards language learning (Paradewari & Mbato, 2018). As a result, educators must recognize that male and female EFL students may possess different learning characteristics; hence, language learning methods should be adjusted to meet these differences by integrating more variations (Ningrum et al., 2024).

Besides learning a language, learners must regulate their learning process, including gaining self-control to complete their thesis writing on time (Paradewari & Mbato, 2018). Self-control can be called self-regulation, which means trying to overcome a propensity to achieve particular goals (Kosanke, 2011). Moreover, self-regulation is students' ability to monitor, evaluate, and engage their learning behaviors and process motivationally and metacognitively to attain learning outcomes (Oates, 2019; Schraw et al., 2006; Schunk, 1996; Schunk & Zimmerman, 2011). In addition, the self-regulation cycle has three stages: planning, action, and evaluation by putting together their self-generated thoughts, feelings, and emotions to accomplish goals such as text analysis, test preparation, and paper writing (Zimmerman et al., 1996). Self-regulation improves students' writing performance; for instance, students can enjoy writing, review their writing, and recall prior knowledge (Mbato & Cendra, 2019). Therefore, learners can recognize their strengths and limitations, which can assist them in controlling their learning to attain their academic goals (Mbato, 2013).

Within social cognitive theories of self-regulated learning, motivation has been characterized as a process in which students actively self-regulate (Zimmerman & Bandura, 1994). Motivation is essential for students because it determines whether they will succeed and helps them stay on the right track in attaining their goal (Dornyei, 1994; Gaimali, 2015). Most students who graduate on time need more motivation to complete their thesis. Indeed, the university has determined the goal, but the students still need the motivation to engage them in attaining their goal (Diasti & Mbato, 2020). Moreover, two factors affect students' motivation to learn: Internal and External (Nabila, 2021). Internal factors

relate to students' motivation to finish their writing quickly, including students' attitudes, desires, pleasures, interests, individual factors, emotions, and feelings (Hadriana et al., 2013). At the same time, external factors involving grades, prizes, praise, surroundings, family, parents, friends, and lecturers can affect students' motivation (Diasti & Mbato, 2020; Hadrina et al., 2013).

Hence, students must maintain and regulate their internal and external motivation to accomplish their goals (Allen et al., 1974). Further, those can be characterized as motivation-regulation strategies when students actively preserve or enhance their motivation (Wolters, 2003; Wolters & Benzon, 2013). Motivation-regulation can be defined as the conscious thoughts and actions employed by learners to enhance, maintain, or regulate their motivation when they perceive it to be insufficient for achieving their goals (Miele & Scholer, 2018; Zhang & Dong, 2022). Trautner et al., (2025) stated that the term 'motivation regulation' refers to learners' observation and understanding of their motivational states and requirements for enhanced or qualitatively different motivation, where they are willing to commence, engage in, or complete a specific goal by addressing the psychological framework that determines motivation.

Wolters (2003) introduced five strategies of motivation-regulation. First, self-consequences are the strategy where the students appreciate their learning by giving rewards after finishing their work, and thinking about the consequences when they postpone their plan to work on the project directly. When the students motivate themselves to avoid doing worse than others to get high grades, they utilize the avoidance goals strategy. Next is the approach goals, where the students aim to learn more and perform better than others. Another strategy is situational interest. It is used when students communicate with themselves to focus more on intrinsic motivation in concrete ways. Finally, environmental structuring is a strategy for students to construct their surroundings as comfortable workplaces.

As Sánchez-Rosas et al. (2019) stated, students who employ motivation regulation strategies frequently hold more adaptive beliefs, such as procrastinating less, putting in more effort, having better self-

efficacy, and prioritizing accomplishment. Thus, students may be aware of and employ various motivational regulation techniques as one essential component of self-regulating learning. This research focuses on five specific adapted strategies and investigates the strategies used by female and male students. The strategies are self-consequences, avoidance goals, approach goals, situational interest, and environmental structuring (Sánchez-Rosas et al., 2019). These theories will be used as the basis for this research to examine strategies used by male and female Indonesian EFL undergraduate students at Sanata Dharma University, Yogyakarta, in writing their theses.

Some studies have been conducted to explore the motivation-regulation strategies used when writing a thesis (Diasti & Mbato, 2020). Their research on undergraduate students indicates they use only some motivation-regulation strategies to write their theses. As a result, the researchers found that students need more motivation to finish their thesis writing because of procrastination, even though they have used motivation regulation. On the contrary, another study indicates that most participants can organize, track, and evaluate their learning process, especially in thesis writing. Moreover, the students show positive intentions regarding external motivation, such as getting help from friends, lecturers, or thesis advisors (Mbato & Cendra, 2019).

A study by Cahyono and Rahayu (2020) regarding students' motivation in writing and writing proficiency across genders revealed differences between male and female students in both motivation and skill levels. This indicated that students with a higher level of motivation showed greater writing proficiency. In the EFL context, the data indicated that female students were more likely to achieve writing proficiency due to their higher motivation in writing. This research shows that students must improve and maintain their writing motivation to attain proficiency in writing.

The second study conducted by Limone et al. (2020) revealed that there are gender differences in terms of students' self-regulated and strategic learning, which is related to personality traits, academic satisfaction, self-efficacy, and self-esteem. Moreover, it showed that the means of male students were lower than those of females, specifically

regarding time management strategy. Additionally, the result of this study was related to Wolters and Benzon (2013), where time management can be considered one of the key determinants of academic procrastination. By contrast, compared to males, females showed a low tendency to regulate cognitive and metacognitive processes, thus determining academic procrastination. As for the construct of time management, it did not turn out to be significant in postponing academic tasks. Therefore, these findings were consistent prior investigations showing that males procrastinate more than females.

The reviewed studies above have researched motivation regulation in terms of writing and their academic learning in general. However, previous studies, including Diasti and Mbato (2020), have not specifically investigated the use of motivation-regulation strategies across gender in thesis writing. Thus, this study addresses the gap by providing a detailed comparison, explicitly focusing on motivation-regulation utilization through the gender perspectives. Further, motivation-regulation includes students' behavior in maintaining their persistence and efforts to complete the task. The current research investigated the motivation-regulation strategies that Wolters (2003) used across genders. It focused on answering two research questions: (1) To what extent do female and male undergraduate students use motivation-regulation strategies in thesis writing? (2) Is there any significant difference between female and male undergraduate students using motivation-regulation strategies in thesis writing? The second research question was developed based on the following hypothesis:

H0: There is no significant difference between female and male undergraduate students in using motivation-regulation strategies.

H1: There is a significant difference between female and male undergraduate students in using motivation-regulation strategies.

METHOD

Research design

The researchers employed a mixed-methods approach to combine quantitative and qualitative methods in response to the research questions (Cresswell, 2014). Quantitative research determined female and male undergraduate students' motivation-regulation strategies

across gender. Meanwhile, qualitative research was employed to identify which female and male students utilized motivation-regulation strategies. Moreover, the combination of these two methods aligns with the principle of compatibility by employing different methods to elaborate, enrich, and logically understand the findings. Therefore, the mixed-methods design is not only an option but a necessity for this research. It enables researchers to record the statistical landscape of motivation regulation, but also humanizing the data, providing an in-depth understanding of how undergraduate students tackle the motivation challenges related to thesis writing (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Participants

The participants were thirty female and thirty male undergraduate students from the English Language Education Study Program, Sanata Dharma University, Yogyakarta, batch 2021, who were still writing their thesis as their final report to graduate from the university.

Table 1.
Participants' Demographic Data

Items	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex	Female	30	50
	Male	30	50
Age	<18	8	13.33
	18	47	78.33
	>18	5	8.33
Academic Year	2021	60	100

The participants were chosen by using a purposive sample (Ary et al., 2014), focusing on those eager to share more in-depth details about the study and their motivation-regulation level (high, moderate, low), resulting from the quantitative data analysis. Purposive sampling is a

nonrandom technique that chooses participants based on specific characteristics such as availability, willingness, and communication abilities to collect relevant information and meet the research objectives (Etikan, 2016). They were chosen based on some categories: first, the participants were EFL undergraduate students at Sanata Dharma University who were still writing their theses. Second, the participants had high, moderate, and low degrees of the motivation-regulation strategies score. Therefore, the criteria assured that their perspectives and experiences would help achieve the research goals.

Instruments and data collection techniques

This study employed two instruments to gather the data: a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. The questionnaire on motivation-regulation strategies was adapted from Wolters and Benzon (2013). The original questionnaire consisted of 31 items in six categories. However, this study used 22 items in five categories of motivation regulation strategies because they were connected to thesis writing and used a Likert scale from 1 to 5 (strongly disagree to strongly agree). The close-ended questionnaire consisted of five types of motivation-regulation strategies, including four items for self-consequences, five for avoidance goals, five for approach goals, five for situational interest, and three for environmental structuring. Finally, some specific sentences were revised to maintain their original meaning while ensuring they align with motivation-regulation strategies specific to thesis writing.

Furthermore, the questionnaire was constructed by considering the validity and reliability of the items. The five aspects of the questionnaire are shown in Table 2.

Table 2.

Validity of the questionnaire items

Motivation- regulation strategies	Category	Number of Items	
		Valid	Invalid
	Self-consequences	2,3,4,5	1
	Avoidance goals	6,7,8,9,10	-
	Approach goals	11,12,13,14,15	-
	Situational interest	16,17,18,19,20	-

Environmental structuring	22,23,24	21,25
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Table 2 shows that three items on motivation-regulation strategies were invalid. The researchers conducted a validity test three times by using SPSS 25. Furthermore, the reliability of the questionnaire was verified by measuring the correlation between individual items and the total score. Reliability was assessed by assessing the internal consistency of the questionnaire. Heale and Twycross (2015) mentioned the categories of the coefficient as weak reliability ($r < 0.3$), moderate reliability ($r = 0.3-0.5$), and excellent reliability ($r > 0.6$). The reliability of the questionnaire can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3.

Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the Motivation-Regulation Strategies questionnaire

Variable	N of items	Cronbach's Alpha	Status
Motivation-regulation strategies	22	.768	Reliable

After removing the invalid statements, Cronbach's Alpha for the motivation-regulation strategies was .768; based on the coefficient, it was defined that the items were strongly and slightly highly reliable. Thus, this questionnaire had excellent internal consistency. According to the test results, the motivation-regulation questionnaire used in this research was valid and reliable for measuring the respective variable.

Furthermore, in gathering the qualitative data, a semi-structured interview was employed in the form of open-ended questions to examine the sample's beliefs, opinions, and feelings about how motivation-regulation strategies influenced their ability to maintain motivation during thesis completion, as well as to gain more data supporting the quantitative findings. It was conducted online via WhatsApp call, where each participant was interviewed for about 40 minutes due to the difficulties of meeting the participants physically. Further, the interviewed participants were selected based on the three categories of motivation-regulation strategies to capture varied answers and perspectives. Therefore, the interview results were recorded and transcribed into a readable form.

Data analysis

An independent sample *t-test* was used to analyze and compare the mean scores of the variables with SPSS 25. The closed-ended questionnaire results were presented in three categories: high (3.68-5.00), moderate (2.34-3.67), and low (1.00-2.33), as found in Astriningsih and Mbato (2019). A table was used to compare the mean and *t-test* scores. The data results were presented in a table showing each item's mean and standard deviation. However, in analyzing the qualitative data, the interviewed participants were coded by applying the Vivo coding technique proposed by Saldaña (2009). This study emphasized active participation in coding and employed five steps of Vivo Coding to improve understanding and reveal relevant interpretations in qualitative research.

Furthermore, the following steps of Vivo coding proposed by Saldaña (2009) were employed; the first step was an early understanding of the data. The researchers read and processed the qualitative data to obtain an initial knowledge of the topic. Second, labelling or coding to the appropriate data units, where patterns and themes from labelled data were looked for. The following strategy was used to ponder and evaluate the data by considering the significance of the detected patterns and themes. This level required a thorough comprehension of the information's message or relevance. Finally, a rich and descriptive narrative framework was created by interviewing two female and two male participants from each level to capture varied answers and perspectives. The semi-structured interview data were tabulated based on five motivation-regulation strategies: self-consequences, avoidance goals, approach goals, situational interest, and environmental structuring.

FINDINGS

This research aimed to investigate female and male undergraduate students' motivation-regulation strategies across gender perspectives and how they applied those strategies in writing their theses. This section presents the findings for the self-consequences,

avoidance goals, approach goals, situational interest, and environmental structuring themes. It was found that males and females used the strategies in different ways. The results of the semi-structured interview interpretation were formulated to support the data. Further, the researchers divided the findings into two sections to represent the answers to each question. The first section discovers the level of undergraduate students' motivation-regulation strategies and how they use those strategies in writing their theses. The second section discusses the motivation-regulation strategies across gender perspectives.

How male and female undergraduates used Motivation-regulation Strategies

Self-consequence strategies and their influence on students' motivation

Table 4.

Self-consequence mean scores and standard deviation

Q	Statement	Mean		Std. Deviation	
		Female	Male	Female	Male
1.	Making a deal to do something fun afterward	4.00	4.27	.938	.691
2.	Telling myself to do my favorite thing afterward	4.00	3.97	.788	.718
3.	Setting a goal of study and promising reward	3.60	3.70	.968	.915
4.	Promising to do something I want after finishing writing chapters	3.93	4.17	.980	.747

As shown in Table 4, in the self-consequences strategies, item number 1 was the highest mean among others (F=4.00, M=4.27). The data reveal that both students frequently utilize self-consequence strategies in managing their motivation during thesis completion. This response aligns with the interview results from female and male students, which can be seen in the excerpts below:

"I always reward myself every time I have done my writing, ... such as buying clothes or food or watching movies to reduce the stress" (F01)

Similarly, a male student noted that rewards gave him something to look for, even breaking up the writing monotony, as can be seen in the following excerpt.

"I would reward myself with something fun, such as an enjoyable dinner, a movie I have wanted to see This helped break up the writing monotony and gave me something to look forward to" (M01).

"After finishing each section of my thesis, I treated myself to a favorite dessert or a quick outing with friends. This gave me a sense of achievement and motivated me ..." (M03).

These excerpts highlighted the emotional regulation aspect of self-consequence strategies, where rewards are not merely incentives but also tools for psychological well-being. Beyond simple rewards, some students integrate breaks to maintain focus and sustained productivity, as seen in the following excerpt.

"I have frequently taken a moment for a recharge. These breaks included going for a stroll, having coffee with a buddy, or doing a hobby ... (F02).

It implies a deeper use of motivation-regulation, in which breaks are an intentional, planned aspect of the writing process intended to manage cognitive load and avoid burnout. This suggests that students are using these strategies to manage their work, not only as external motivation. Further, participants in the statements use self-reward strategies to minimize stress while writing their thesis. Both genders underline the significance of taking breaks and rewarding oneself after finishing writing assignments, including paragraphs or chapters. Rewards vary from enjoying favorite meals or activities to interacting with friends. These actions break the monotony and provide a sense of accomplishment and relaxation, boosting motivation and productivity.

Avoidance-goals strategies and their influence on students' motivation

Table 5.

Avoidance goals mean scores and standard deviation

Q	Statement	Mean		Std. Deviation	
		Female	Male	Female	Male
5.	I remind myself that I aim to avoid doing worse than other students.	3.77	3.63	1.073	1.066
6.	I think about completing what I am assigned as soon as possible because I am trying to avoid worse than others	3.83	3.60	.791	1.037
7.	My goal is to avoid doing worse than others on exam	3.73	3.43	.868	1.040
8.	I make an effort to avoid having worse performance than others	3.80	3.63	.664	.928
9.	I must continue writing to avoid others doing better than me	3.87	3.57	.681	1.006

Table 5 shows the mean score in avoidance-goals strategies. It revealed that female and male students used different strategies. As shown in Table 5, item number 9 was the highest mean used by female students among others (F=3.87). Meanwhile, male students used strategies in items 5 and 8 in moderate use (M=3.63). Item number 9 stated that the students must continue writing to prevent others from doing better than them. Further, it implied that female students continue to write and work on their thesis to prevent their colleagues from exceeding them. They see others' growth or success as a danger to their achievements, and they work hard to keep up with or even outperform their peers. The female student's response can be seen in the following excerpt:

"The progress of my friends' thesis work reminded me of the competitiveness in our academic circle, which motivated me to work harder ..." (F03)

"I felt compelled to match their accomplishments and avoid being seen as falling behind. This motivated me to prioritize my writing assignments and devote my full attention to finishing my thesis ..." (F02)

Meanwhile, male students used different strategies from female students. Male students used the strategies in items 5 and 8 in moderate use (mean 3.63). Item number 5 stated that male students remind themselves that they aim to avoid doing worse than other students. It implied that male students are motivated to maintain their performance levels compared to their classmates. They are encouraged to work hard for perfection in their thesis because they fear falling behind their peers. This statement aligns with the interview results with male students below:

“The competitive environment among classmates encouraged me to perform well ...” (M03)

“I frequently compared my success to that of my classmates, which encouraged me to keep going forward ...” (M02)

The responses above indicate gender-specific differences in avoidance-goal strategies used during thesis writing. Female students, driven by a fear of being outperformed by their peers, seek to match or exceed their achievements. This fear-driven competitiveness fosters a sense of urgency, motivating individuals to work hard to avoid falling behind. Meanwhile, male students are motivated by the competitive academic environment to avoid underperforming their colleagues. This urge motivates individuals to work hard to maintain their academic position. These findings highlight the varied gender dynamics influencing motivation and performance in contexts of thesis writing.

Approach goals strategies and their influence on students' motivation

Table 6.

Approach goals mean scores and standard deviation

Q	Statement	Mean		Std. Deviation	
		Female	Male	Female	Male
10.	I remind myself about how important it is to get good grades	3.67	3.73	.922	1.143
11.	I wonder how my grade will be affected if I do not finish writing my thesis	3.77	3.97	.858	.928
12.	I remind myself that my goal is to perform	3.47	3.80	.629	.961

	better than others				
13.	I make an effort to get good grades	3.67	3.83	.758	1.053
14.	I tell myself that thesis writing grades affect my future	3.60	3.87	.855	.730

The approach goal strategies showed that most female and male students wonder how their grades will be affected if they do not finish writing their thesis. It can be seen in item number 11, which reached the highest mean among others (F=3.77, M=3.97). Moreover, it implied that students are concerned about the academic consequences of failing to finish their thesis. Both male and female students are motivated by the possibility of losing grades if they do not complete their thesis on time or to the required standard. This concern underlines the importance of academic success and the knowledge that thesis completion is crucial in determining final grades. Further, this statement was supported by F04, F05, M05, and M09, who stated:

"I worried about my grades if I did not finish on time ... that could affect my overall GPA. That fear motivated me to stay committed and focused" (F04).

"... the significance of thesis completion in determining my final grades since my grades are essential to me. So, the thought of losing grades if I do not finish my thesis on time is always in my mind." (F05)

"I know the academic consequences of not finishing my thesis, particularly the effect on my grade. First, my major concern is the possibility of getting a lower grade..." (M05).

"The concern about how my grades would be affected if I did not finish my thesis always becomes a reminder for me ..." (M09)

The statements emphasize the common concern among female and male students, regardless of gender, concerning the potential consequences for their grades if they fail to submit their thesis on time. The fear is a powerful motivation, highlighting the importance of thesis completion in maintaining their academic status and obtaining the

highest possible grades. Students demonstrate an in-depth understanding of the impact on their overall GPA and educational aspirations, encouraging them to be motivated and focused on completing their thesis successfully to ensure their academic success. His concern demonstrates the value placed on academic accomplishment and the knowledge that thesis completion is essential to their academic journey.

Situational interest strategies use and their influence on students' motivation

Table 7.

Situational interest mean scores and standard deviation

Q	Statement	Mean		Std. Deviation	
		Female	Male	Female	Male
15.	Learning through games is more enjoyable	3.07	3.90	.828	.960
16.	Attempting to turn material or completing the assignment into a game	3.03	3.73	.809	.944
17.	Focusing on a subject that is interesting to appreciate writing	4.03	4.57	.765	.568
18.	Attempting to persuade that writing can be fun	3.57	4.00	.774	.743
19.	Consider a strategy to make the task seem pleasant to complete	4.20	4.37	.847	.615

Table 7 shows that female and male students used different situational interest strategies. Female students consider a strategy to make the task seem pleasant to complete, as the highest mean score indicated in item 19 (F=4.20). Otherwise, male students focus on an exciting subject to appreciate their writing, as seen in item 17 (M=4.57). The results implied that female students focused on enhancing satisfaction and enjoyment of completing the thesis by making the task more pleasant to complete. Meanwhile, male students maintain their interest and enthusiasm for the subject they are interested in throughout the process. Moreover, in the results of the interview session, F05 shared her opinion about her strategy to make the task seem pleasant to complete in the situational interest section. Her answer can be seen below:

"I discovered that adding aspects of my interests to my thesis topic made the writing process more enjoyable ..."(F05)

"I prefer to discuss my thesis topic with classmates or professors with similar research fields ... who have similar interests gave me insightful perspectives." (F03)

Meanwhile, male students used different strategies from female students. Male students focus on an interesting subject so that they can appreciate their writing, as seen in item number 17. It revealed that male students emphasize finding an interesting subject for their thesis to appreciate and enjoy the writing process. This method implies that male students find motivation and enjoyment in investigating issues that engage their interest and curiosity. This statement can be seen through the interview results below:

"The key to maintaining focus while writing my thesis was choosing a topic that interested me.." (M06)

"Selecting an engaging subject for my thesis was important for keeping my enthusiasm and interest throughout the writing process..."(M07)

The statements indicate that female and male students use different situational interest strategies when writing their thesis. Females prioritize increasing happiness by incorporating personal interests into their topics, which promotes enjoyment in their writing process. Males, on the other hand, focus on choosing exciting subjects that will keep their interest and enthusiasm throughout. Moreover, these strategies represent individual preferences for maintaining interest and motivation during thesis writing, emphasizing the significance of the approach based on specific interests and motivations.

Environmental structuring and its influence on Students' motivation

Table 8.

Environmental structuring mean scores and standard deviation

Q	Statement	Mean		Std. Deviation	
		Female	Male	Female	Male
20.	Avoiding distractions in writing	4.43	4.17	1.006	.834
21.	Changing the environment to focus on work	4.33	4.10	.959	1.094
22.	Preferring to listen to the music	3.47	3.57	1.456	1.251

As shown in Table 8, most female and male students avoid distractions while writing their thesis. It can be seen in item number 20, which reached the highest mean among others ($F = 4.43$, $M = 4.17$). In addition, it implied both male and female students prioritize avoiding distractions when writing their thesis. This suggests intentionally establishing a concentrated work environment that promotes productivity. Students attempt to improve their attention and progress toward writing their thesis by reducing disruptions, such as turning off notifications or finding quiet areas. Moreover, female and male students shared their opinion in the interview session as followed:

"I avoid distractions by turning off my phone and finding a quiet workspace..." (F01)

"I minimize distractions by dedicating specific writing times and finding a quiet space..." (F04)

"I make sure to eliminate distractions by finding a quiet spot in the library or using apps to block distracting websites..." (M02)

"I'll often schedule my writing sessions during times when I know I won't be interrupted, like early in the morning or late at night..." (M03)

Both male and female students prioritize avoiding distractions while writing their thesis, as seen by their high mean scores on item 20. This conscious effort to create a concentrated work environment includes turning off notifications, seeking out quiet workplaces, and organizing focused writing time. Students expect to improve their attention by reducing distractions and consistently progress toward completing their thesis successfully.

Motivation-Regulation Strategies across gender

The second research question examined whether or not there is a difference between female and male students' motivation-regulation strategies used in thesis writing. Table 9 shows the descriptive statistics of the EFL students' motivation-regulation strategies in thesis writing

based on gender (male and female students). At the same time, Table 10 presents the result of the comparison of the means.

Table 9.

Descriptive Statistics of the EFL Students in terms of Motivation-Regulation Strategies

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Motivation-Regulation Strategies	Female	30	82.83	8.211	1.499
	Male	30	85.57	8.346	1.524

Table 9 shows the motivation-regulation strategies of male and female undergraduate students. The mean score of male students was 85.57, while that of female students was 82.83. Thus, the mean score of male students was higher than that of female students. This is an initial trend showing that male students, on average, showed higher levels of involvement with the assessed motivation-regulation strategies. Furthermore, the results of the mean comparison of motivation-regulation strategies based on gender perspectives can be seen in Table 10.

Table 10.

Mean comparison of Motivation-Regulation Strategies across gender

		Motivation-regulation strategies in writing	
		Equal variances assumed	Equal variances are not assumed.
Levene's test for equality of variances	F	.370	
	Sig.	.545	
t-test for Equality of Means	t	-29.000	-29.000
	df	58	29.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000
	Mean Difference	-.967	-.967
	Std. Error Difference	0.33	0.33
	95%		
	Lower	-1.033	-1.035

Confidence interval of the difference	Upper	-900	-898
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An independent sample t-test was conducted to determine the statistical significance of the observed difference. The comparison of the two means, as shown in Table 10, indicates that there is a significant difference between male and female mean scores of motivation-regulation strategies. The mean difference between the two gender groups was significant at .000 with $p < .05$, which means the null hypothesis of no significant difference between undergraduate male and female students in thesis writing is rejected. Moreover, this indicates that male students used motivation-regulation strategies in thesis writing compared to females.

DISCUSSION

This study reveals a significant and sophisticated relationship between gender and the use of motivation-regulation strategies among EFL undergraduate students during thesis writing. These findings underscore a deeper issue regarding a standard approach to academic help, which may prove ineffective. The study indicates that male students employ these strategies more frequently, an issue that has significant implications for understanding and supporting student motivation.

Fundamentally, female students demonstrate a stronger performance-avoidant orientation, as illustrated by relying on avoidance goals influenced by external social comparisons and worries about negative grading. The difference highlights gendered motivational frameworks as males often regulate motivation by integrating mastery goals, whereas extrinsic social factors more influence females. Furthermore, this theoretical framework aligns with the goal orientation theory proposed by Linnenbrink and Pintrich (2002) and further developed in Wang and Rao's (2022) and Linnenbrink et al. 2018. Moreover, it highlights gender differences in avoidance and approach goals within academic contexts. The current data enhances this idea by

demonstrating how these orientations significantly influence motivation regulation strategies in the specific context of thesis writing, a challenging and prolonged academic endeavour.

Additionally, the findings reveal that both genders similarly utilize strategies like self-consequences and environmental structuring, such as self-rewarding, minimizing distractions, to manage their motivation while writing their thesis. The consistent utilization of self-rewards emphasizes its importance in maintaining endeavour, whereas environmental management supports emphasized engagement. Further, this finding is supported by the study from Huang et al. (2024), Bardach and Murayama (2024), Dörrenbächer-Ulrich et al. (2024), and Wolters and Brady (2021), who indicate that self-reward and a structured educational environment significantly enhance motivation and academic achievement across challenging academic endeavours.

Both female and male students showed significant approach goals, indicating significant concern regarding the negative consequences of failing to complete their thesis on their academic achievement and GPA. This aligns with the findings of Meyer et al. (2019) and Koenka (2020), which indicates that grade orientation significantly impacts academic behaviour, highlighting the substantial role of academic success concerns as motivators in high-stakes contexts, as further highlighted by Fryer et al. (2021) and Dawadi (2020).

However, significant gender differences were found in the use of situational interest strategies. Female students tended to prioritize the emotional enjoyment of thesis writing, indicating a higher emotional interest. This aligns with Rotgans and Schmidt's (2020) approach that differentiates affective from cognitive interest. In contrast, male students indicated greater motivation when intellectually stimulated by engaging subjects, reflecting a cognitive curiosity orientation as evidenced by the research of Renninger and Hidi (2020) and Krapp (2007). This sophisticated comprehension of interest discusses how gender affects motivation through different approaches: emotional fulfillment for females and cognitive engagement for males. The findings align with Lepper et al. (2022), who argue that engaging with personally significant subjects promotes intrinsic motivation and significant involvement. This

indicates the necessity of customizing thesis topics and writing assignments to maximize these gender-specific motivational preferences for improved academic persistence and achievement.

Furthermore, the second research question examined if significant differences emerged in utilizing motivation-regulation strategies between female and male undergraduates while writing their theses. The findings demonstrate a statistically significant difference in the overall reported utilization of these strategies across genders. Male students had a higher mean score ($M=85.57$) in the utilization of motivation-regulation strategies compared to female students ($M=82.83$), which signifies that females in this study demonstrated a lower average strategy utilization than males. In addition, there was a statistically significant difference at a p-value of .000, allowing the rejection of the null hypothesis, which claimed no significant difference in the utilization of motivation-regulation strategies between female and male undergraduate students during thesis writing.

This study enhances comprehension of the effect of gender on motivation regulation strategies during the challenging endeavour of thesis writing, as supported by Wolters (2003) and Sánchez-Rosas et al.'s (2019) findings. This suggests that gender influences students' conscious control of their motivation to maintain focus and succeed in continuous academic endeavours. The results link with the previous studies, indicating gender differences in the use of motivational strategies during writing (Al-Saadi, 2020; Andriani & Mbato, 2021; Cahyono & Rahayu, 2020; Janah et al., 2022; Korpershoek et al., 2021; Limone et al., 2020) highlighting the necessity for gender-specific strategies to enhance student motivation.

Some studies indicate that females surpass males in writing motivation, while males show a higher tendency for procrastination (Cahyono & Rahayu, 2020; Limone et al., 2020). The different findings of this study highlight the complexity of gender differences in motivation regulation. Therefore, the universal necessity for all students to enhance and maintain their motivation for writing proficiency indicates that interventions should foster motivation development across genders rather than assuming intrinsic advantages. However, research conducted

by Agustrianti et al. (2016) and Ardila (2020) revealed no significant gender differences in motivation regulation strategies in writing, indicating comparable motivational attitudes and results among female and male students. This challenges beliefs about gendered motivation and shows that effective motivation regulation may depend more on individual aspects, underlining the need to focus on individualized assistance rather than broad gender-based differences.

The fact that male students employ motivation regulation strategies more frequently than female students emphasizes the necessity for specific support to assist female students in acquiring these skills. Educators and institutions might address this by implementing customized classes, support groups, and personalized advice for regulating motivation in thesis writing. Recognizing gender gaps in motivation regulation is essential for enhancing balanced academic achievement and encouraging self-regulated learning. This necessitates an in-depth study of the underlying reasons of these differences and the development of treatments that assist all students in achieving control of motivation management.

Thus, the statistically significant difference in motivation-regulation strategies used between male and female undergraduate EFL students during thesis writing carries both theoretical and practical significance. It enhances the current paradigm in motivation and self-regulated learning research by emphasising the significance of gender. Moreover, the finding leads educators to develop more gender-specific support that effectively meets students' motivational needs and requirements, hence improving academic achievement in challenging assignments such as thesis writing.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the practical use of motivation-regulation strategies among male and female undergraduate EFL students during thesis writing. According to this study, male and female undergraduate EFL students used motivation-regulation strategies differently when writing their theses. Male students reported using these strategies more frequently than their female peers. Although both genders employed

strategies such as environmental structuring and self-consequences, there were significant differences in how they utilised avoidance goals and situational interest, indicating that gender may influence how students actively regulate their motivation for difficult, prolonged studies.

Furthermore, these findings highlight the significance of acknowledging gender gaps in educational settings, especially for motivation-regulation strategies in thesis writing. Educators and advisors should recognize that motivation and motivation-regulation strategies may vary between male and female students and adjust their support accordingly. By identifying the differences, they can develop better methods that enhance students' motivation, self-regulation, and overall thesis writing experience. Nonetheless, the results of this study are limited. The sample was obtained from only one university in Indonesia, perhaps limiting the applicability of the findings to other cultural or educational contexts. This study focused on five motivation-regulation strategies, possibly excluding other relevant strategies such as time management or seeking social support. Further study should address these limitations by examining a wider range of strategies and including varied cultural and educational contexts to comprehend better how gender and other factors influence motivation regulation during thesis writing.

DECLARATION OF AI AND AI-ASSISTED TECHNOLOGIES

While preparing this work, the authors employed Quillbot and DeepL (V.24.4.3) to enhance language and readability. Furthermore, the author used AI to enhance the coherence of the writing. The author has carefully reviewed and revised the article as necessary and acknowledges complete responsibility for the publication's content after using these tools.

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