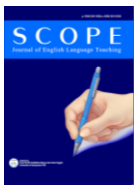
SCOPE
Journal of English Language Teaching
| p-ISSN 2541-0326 | e-ISSN 2541-0334 |
https://journal.lppmunindra.ac.id/index.php/SCOPE/



Research Article

Balancing Workload and Thesis Guidance: How Supervisors Provide Effective Feedback to Students

Masitha Rahma[1], Ekaning Dewanti Laksmi[2], Yusnita Febrianti[3]

[1,2,3] *Universitas Negeri Malang, Jl. Semarang 5, Malang 65145, Indonesia*

KEYWORDS

Workload;
Thesis guidance;
Feedback;
Supervisors' strategies

CORRESPONDING AUTHOR(S):

E-mail:
masitharahma_masitharahma1999@gmail.com*

A B S T R A C T

Workload affected the supervisors in giving feedback during thesis guidance and gave the impacts to the students' process in completing their thesis. So, the present research aimed to fill the gap by investigating the supervisors' strategies to ensure effective feedback during thesis guidance dealing with their heavy workload. Gaining the objective of the research, a narrative inquiry approach was used to support and carry out the research. Three supervisors of graduate thesis of English Language Education of State University of Malang were involved as the research subjects. For collecting the data, partially structured interviews were employed as the instrument of the research. The interview questions were adapted from the findings of Bahtilla (2022). Following the collection of the data, the researchers proceeded to analyze it in accordance with the six-step model for the analysis of qualitative data set forth by Creswell (2012). The analysis included qualitative data obtained from interviews. A detailed analysis of the data revealed that participants employed several strategies to ensure effective feedback dealing with heavy workload during thesis guidance. These strategies included holding face-to-face meetings, conducting virtual meetings, establishing consultation regulations, sending thesis drafts via email, scheduling specific times for feedback, and requesting students to provide reminders.

INTRODUCTION

Extensive research projects have been carried out to investigate how workload affected the supervisors in giving feedback during thesis guidance. The supervisor's academic workload such as courses being taught, number of students being supervised, scripts marking are usually very enormous and, in most cases, leading to excess workload. This might invariably affect the quantity/quality of time available for thesis supervision (Adenagbe et al., 2021). Bastola (2022) found that supervisors were unable to provide prompt and detailed feedback because they had many students to supervise in addition to a full teaching load. For supervisors, with their busy schedules and other responsibilities, it is challenging to provide instant communication and supervision for students on time (Almeatani et al., 2019). In addition, Bahtilla (2022) revealed a majority of the participants mentioned heavy workload as one of the factors that hindered timely feedback. They explained that supervisors were inadequate; they were not enough supervisors, which had

DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.30998/scope.v9i2.24504
Copyright ©2025

led to a heavy workload. Besides the fact that supervisors often supervised more students than they should, most of them were also engaged in other academic activities such as teaching, community service, and administrative duties. Also, Rugut and Chang'ach (2023) stated it was clear that the thesis supervision process seemed ineffective when supervisors were demotivated and overburden with heavy workload of supervising many students and at the same time carrying other responsibilities like teaching, marking and administrative duties.

To observe the impact of heavy workload to the students' process in completing thesis, further studies have been put in place. Bahtilla and Oben (2021) found that students expressed frustration about having to chase their supervisors for feedback. They had formed the impression that some supervisors were too busy or short of time to meet with students. According to Almeatani et. al. (2019), students claimed that lack of communication with thesis advisors result in failing or delaying in thesis completion. This was supported by Zaheer and Munir (2020). They claimed that if student–supervisor interactions were regular without any delays, it could foster the relationship and let students finish their research projects/theses well within time. Tladi and Seretse (2021) also found that intense research supervision motivated students and led to positive results. The completion was easier when the students and supervisors had discussion and kept in touch (Marhaban et al., 2021). Those implied that the quantity/quality of time available for thesis guidance gave the impact on the students' process in thesis completion.

Late feedback as the following result of heavy workload became the challenge for the students. The students agreed that their thesis supervisors were difficult to meet and gave slow feedback to them so that they got delay on their thesis writing (Abrar et al., 2023; Bakhou & Bouhania, 2020; Safitri et al., 2021). The following result of heavy workload was undetailed feedback. According to Bahtilla and Oben (2021), students preferred specific feedback because it was meaningful. When supervisors gave general feedback, it stressed the students and slowed down the research process instead of facilitating it. Another result of heavy workload was ineffective thesis guidance. The impact was the students were not satisfied with their supervisors to the extent that they were willing to change their supervisors if given an opportunity. If a student was not satisfied working with a particular supervisor to the extent that he or she wanted to change, there was a high probability that the supervisor was not effectively performing his or her role, which definitely affected the quality of the thesis or dissertation produced at the end of the process and the students might not acquire the necessary knowledge and skills needed to become an independent researcher (Bahtilla & Oben, 2021).

Previous studies focused primarily on identifying the challenges and negative effects of supervisors' heavy workload on their ability to provide timely and detailed feedback during thesis guidance, very few investigated practical solutions that supervisors can implement to mitigate the negative effects of heavy workload on thesis supervision since supervisory feedback played a key role in thesis writing (Bastola, 2021; Bastola & Hu, 2023). It had a significant effect on the quality of the thesis (Gezahegn & Gedamu, 2023) and aimed for two goals: timely completion and independent research writer (Carter & Kumar, 2017). Another consideration was the fact that the students still faced difficulties although they had learned research at undergraduate and master's levels (Sitompul & Anditasari, 2022). So, the present research aimed to fill the gap by finding out the strategies that supervisors use to provide effective feedback while managing a heavy workload. In answering the aim of the research, the research was guided by the question: What strategies do the supervisors employ to ensure effective feedback during thesis guidance dealing with heavy workload?

METHOD

The objective of the research is to investigate the supervisors' strategies to ensure effective feedback during thesis guidance dealing with their heavy workload. In order to achieve the objective of the research, a narrative inquiry was employed as a means of providing support and carrying out the research, given that a narrative inquiry is concerned with the experiences of one or more individuals (Ary et al., 2010; Creswell, 2012). The researchers were interested in exploring the experiences of supervisors in ensuring feedback for students during thesis guidance.

The research participants were three supervisors of graduate thesis of English Language Education in one of public universities in Malang, East Java, Indonesia. They were referred to anonymously using the following codes: Participant 1, Participant 2, and Participant 3. The participants were selected based on their fulfilment of workload criteria, as determined by findings from Bahtilla (2022). She presented the perceptions on heavy workload from the supervisors referred to the supervision of numerous students and engagement in other academic activities, such as teaching, research, community service, and administrative duties. The number of students under the participants' guidance for this research varied. Participant 1 stated that there were four students from the Bachelor's degree and four students from the Master's degree. Participant 2 indicated that there were fifteen students from the Bachelor's degree and six students from the Master's degree. Participant 3 stated that there were

DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.30998/scope.v9i2.24504

approximately twenty students from the Bachelor's degree, twenty students from the Master's degree, and around ten to twelve students from the Doctoral degree. Unfortunately, the findings of Bahtilla (2022) did not provide the exact number categorized as "too many students" by the participants involved. However, she stated that according to MINESUP (2017), the maximum number of the students per supervisor should be eight students; it was unusual for supervisors to supervise more than 15 students at a time due to inadequate supervisors. In short, the participants in this research fulfilled the criteria established by Bahtilla (2022) regarding supervising numerous students.

In addition to thesis guidance, the participants in this research also engaged in other academic activities, which led to a considerable workload. These activities included teaching (12-18 credits), research collaborations, conference committee members (iNELTAL, ISoLEC, and ASIA TEFL), community service (keynote speakers), and administrative duties (academic advisors and supervisors of *Kuliah Kerja Lapangan, Praktik Pengalaman Lapangan, Kampus Mengajar,* and *Asistensi Mengajar).* It is important to note that all of these activities are inextricably linked to the obligations of a lecturer, which are outlined in the Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia Number 12 Year 2012 concerning Higher Education. Lecturers are professional educators and scientists whose primary responsibility is to facilitate the transformation, development and dissemination of scientific and technological knowledge through education, research and community service.

Due to time constraints and the need for timely data collection, accessibility was also a factor in participant selection (Berg, 2001; Cohen et al., 2007). The participants were readily accessible, responsive, and willing to participate, which was crucial given the limited timeframe of the research.

In brief, while the selection process incorporated practical considerations such as accessibility and time constraints, the primary criteria were based on ensuring that participants met the specific requirements outlined by Bahtilla (2022) and were relevant to addressing the research questions. This approach, supported by both practical and theoretical literature, provided a robust foundation for the participant selection process.

For collecting the data, partially structured interviews were employed as the instrument of the research. That type of interview using formulated questions but the researchers were allowed to modify the formats during the interview process (Ary et al., 2010). The interview questions were adapted from the findings of Bahtilla (2022) related to one of the factors that hindered supervisors for giving timely feedback; heavy workload.

Some of the interview questions included: total number of the supervisee from Bachelor, Master's, and Doctoral degree, participants' academic activities beside thesis supervision, and participants' strategies in giving feedback. The interviews were conducted face-to-face and virtual, depending on the participants' preference. The interviews took time around 20 minutes and recorded using cellphone voice recorder. In order to gain access to the participants and sites, the researchers sought and obtained permission from the university to conduct the research. Once this approval had been granted, the researchers sent each participant a voluntary informed consent. Once the participants had given their agreement, the researchers set the schedule for conducting the interviews. Pseudonyms were employed to protect the confidentiality of participants, ensuring their privacy and complying with ethical guidelines.

In essence, the research methodology involved interviews. It was grounded in validated instrument. The instrument, meticulously developed and refined through experts' input, provided a robust foundation for the research, ensuring its credibility and ability to investigate the supervisors' strategies to ensure effective feedback dealing with heavy workload.

Following the collection of the data, the researchers proceeded to analyze it in accordance with the six-step model for the analysis of qualitative data set forth by Creswell (2012). The analysis included qualitative data obtained from interviews. After completing the interviews with the participants, the researchers proceeded to transcribe the recorded interviews. As the researchers conducted a thorough review of the transcripts on multiple occasions, they wrote down some notes that recorded her first impressions about the data. To ensure that the data effectively answered the research questions, the researchers read the transcripts again. The data then were coded carefully. Similar codes were grouped into themes that helped generate them. The researchers wrote down how these themes reflected or differed from experiences reported by other researchers in the literature.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results revealed the strategies that supervisors used to provide feedback during thesis guidance despite their heavy workloads. The discussion examined how these results aligned with or differed from existing theories and findings from previous research.

Table 1 Supervisors' Strategies in Providing Feedback during Thesis Guidance

Holding Face-to-face Meetings
Conducting Virtual Meetings
Establishing Consultation Regulations
Sending Theses Drafts via Email
Scheduling Specific Times for Providing Feedback
Requesting Students to Provide Reminders

1. Holding Face-to-face Meetings

The first strategy proposed by all participants in this research was holding face-to-face meetings. Dowling and Wilson (2015) sated that while technology enhanced perceptions of the value and quality of supervision, there was no replacing the personal face to face interactions between student and supervisor. The personal nature of face to face was invaluable, allowing 'the supervisor to gauge emotionally how you are doing' or 'you do actually think outside the square when you meet face to face'. Taylor et. al. (2018) recommended that, where feasible, there should be at least some face-to-face meetings, particularly during the initial stages, which might involve seeing candidates when they were on campus for the induction program.

Although participants in this current research mentioned that holding face-to-face meetings was one of their strategies to ensure giving feedback to the students, the researchers found different points of view from each participant. Participant 1 was the most likely to recommend face-to-face meetings. He had told the students they could discuss the schedule with him to get a thesis consultation. He added that it made the consultation easier for the students. Participant 1 preferred giving feedback directly and/or orally to the students to ensure they understood. The following was a statement by Participant 1 regarding this strategy.

> … In the supervision activities, we can find that some students make the mistakes or the errors. That is why I just want to give the feedback directly. I have to explain about the mistake that they have done. They have to realize about the errors or the mistakes that they have done. So, that is why I give the feedback directly to make sure that they understand what I said (Participant 1).

Participant 1 emphasized the importance of direct feedback in helping students recognize and understand their mistakes. By providing immediate, face-to-face explanations, he aimed to ensure that students grasped the nuances of their errors, fostering a deeper learning experience. This strategy not only clarified misunderstandings but also encouraged students to take ownership of their writing process. Thus, Participant 1's preference for direct interaction highlighted the value he placed on effective communication in guidance. While Participant 1 was the most inclined to recommend face-to-face meetings, two other participants indicated that this would be their preferred option only when they felt a face-to-face meeting was necessary. In regard to this strategy, the following was a statement from Participant 3.

> I prefer supervising them online because whenever they want offline or face-to-face supervision, I have to put aside some weak or some days for them, right? So, I usually put aside Monday for face-to-face consultation if the students want it. If not, I would say just send me a draft via email, then I will read it. And then, if I think we need to meet, then we will make an appointment. If not, then I will give my feedback online also. … (Participant 3).

Participant 3 expressed a preference for online guidance, emphasizing the flexibility it provided for both her and the students. She noted that face-to-face meetings could be time-consuming, requiring her to dedicate specific days solely for in-person consultations. By offering online feedback, she could accommodate more students efficiently, allowing them to submit drafts via email and receive timely responses. Participant 3's approach reflected a pragmatic balance between accessibility and personal interaction, as she indicated she would arrange in-person meetings only when absolutely necessary. This strategy contrasted with Participant 1's experience, where despite his best efforts to clarify concepts during face-to-face consultations, students still struggled to grasp the material. He was unable to envisage the consultation being conducted in an online meeting. Consequently, he did not permit the students to engage in online activities with him. The following quotations from Participant 1 illustrated the situation.

> … holding the offline activities is still something difficult to be understood by the students, okay. So, now, you can imagine to what happens when you have the online activity, it is more difficult and I think it just wastes the time so that is why I do not let my students have the online activity with me. … (Participant 1).

Participant 1's statement highlighted the challenges students faced in grasping concepts during offline activities, suggesting that the complexity of the material

DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.30998/scope.v9i2.24504

was overwhelming even in direct interactions. He expressed concern that if students struggled to understand in person, transitioning to online formats would only exacerbate the difficulties, leading to wasted time and ineffective communication. This finding was contrasted with the finding of Suparman (2021). He found that the students easily understood the suggestions and opinions of their supervisors when the online thesis supervision was implemented.

To sum up, the practice of conducting face-to-face meetings for the purpose of research guidance presents a number of advantages and challenges, particularly for those engage in supervisory roles with significant workloads. On a positive note, these meetings permit supervisors to address queries or concerns promptly, thereby facilitating more expedient problem resolution and more efficacious guidance. Nevertheless, the necessity for supervisors to dedicate a considerable amount of time to face-to-face meetings prove challenging to accommodate for those who are already overburdened. Furthermore, scheduling conflicts further complicate the process and potentially lead to delays in guidance. To optimally manage their workload while still providing timely and high-quality guidance, supervisors might consider a combined strategy, combining face-to-face meetings with alternative communication strategies such as virtual meetings or written feedback via email. This can help meet the demands of both the supervisor and the student, ensuring productive and efficient guidance.

2. Conducting Virtual Meetings

The second strategy was conducting virtual meetings. Participant 2 revealed that one of her strategies to ensure feedback for the students was to conduct meetings virtually using online meeting tools. Participant 2 consistently requested that students sent their theses via email in form of Google Documents. When students sought further clarification and requested in-person meetings, which she was unable to facilitate, virtual meetings were conducted instead. The following Participant 2's statements provided evidence in support of this strategy.

> I always ask the students send it by email and then if they have questions and I could not meet them in person, in face-to-face like face-to-face in the office, I am asking the students, 'Please make a Zoom link or G-meet link so that we can discuss your work.'… (Participant 2).

Participant 2's statements emphasized her commitment to maintaining open lines of communication with her students, even when in-person meetings were not feasible. By requesting students to send their theses via email and encouraging them to create virtual meeting links, she demonstrated her adaptability and willingness to provide support. This strategy ensured that students could still receive feedback and clarification on their work, highlighting the importance of using technology to facilitate effective guidance despite physical limitations. The findings of this research aligned with those of Satriani et. al. (2023). The students submitted their writing drafts in the form of Microsoft Word and Google Documents, and the supervisors checked those drafts. When students required further clarification, they convened an online meeting via applications such as Zoom, Google Meet, and WhatsApp video meeting. This approach afforded flexibility to both the supervisor and the students.

Similarly, when students were engaged in data collection, which was conducted remotely from the university, Participant 2 found virtual meetings to be more effective than requiring them to come to campus, which was time-consuming due to the distance. The following were responses from Participant 2 who proposed this strategy.

> … When students took data for cycle 1 for example, they were asking me, 'Ma'am, can I meet you?', 'Where?', and they said, 'Is it okay to have an online meeting?', 'Fine.' They don't have to meet me. Travelling from there to here already takes a lot of time, so it's actually more effective for them to complete the list at home (Participant 2).

Participant 2's responses illustrated her recognition of the practical challenges students faced during data collection, especially when remote locations made travel to campus time-consuming. By allowing online meetings, she acknowledged that students could work more efficiently from their own environments, minimizing the burden of travel. This flexibility not only supported students in managing their time effectively but also enhanced their ability to complete their research tasks, emphasizing the value of virtual meetings in facilitating productive guidance. The findings of the research corroborate those previously reported by Rahardjo (2021). He also identified the rationale behind the decision to conduct thesis supervision via virtual meetings. This was due to the fact that the majority of students resided in locations that were distant from their supervisors. This situation necessitated significant time, energy, and financial resources in the thesis guidance process if it was conducted in person. In this instance, online meetings served as a conduit for students who encountered difficulties in conducting face-to-face guidance.

While this strategy had several advantages, namely facilitating supervisors in providing feedback on students who were geographically distant from campus, it also had some disadvantages. One such disadvantage was the duration of the meetings. Supervisors were experiencing high workloads, necessitating careful time management. However, Participant 2 found herself spending more time than anticipated on these meetings. Nevertheless, she was ultimately content with this outcome, as it was her responsibility. She subsequently provided the following statement regarding her experience.

> … and when I have appointment with one person, sometimes, this one student tells other students I am going to conduct a meeting. It should take fifteen minutes, but it takes an hour and a half. It is okay because if I do not really guide, it will be a problem during the exam (Participant 2).

Participant 2's statement reflected the reality that while she intended for meetings to be brief, they often extended far beyond the scheduled time due to the complexities of supervising her students. This situation underscored her commitment to thorough guidance, as she recognized that providing adequate support was essential to preventing issues later, especially during exams. Her willingness to invest extra time highlighted the challenges supervisors faced in balancing time management with the responsibility of ensuring students received the guidance they needed for their success. Satriani et. al. (2023) also identified the disadvantages of virtual meetings supervision, namely the duration of revision. To check all the students' drafts, supervisors were required to allocate time, and they were unable to avoid the necessity of undertaking the work twice when they explained the correction in a synchronous session.

Based on these advantages and disadvantages, conducting virtual meetings can be employed to enhance the efficacy of the guidance process by adjusting the situation and condition to the needs of both students and supervisors.

3. Establishing Consultation Regulations

The third strategy was establishing consultation regulations. In order to monitor the students' progress during thesis guidance despite experiencing a considerable workload, Participant 1 established the regulations for the students under his guidance, requiring them to inform him of their progress on a monthly basis. The following was a transcript of Participant 1's statements who supported this strategy.

> … For example, 'Make sure that in one month, so you can try to contact me for getting the consultation. Whatever the progress you will have. So, just tell me about the progress that you may have in one month or each month because I have to know.' … (Participant 1).

This emphasis on regular communication highlighted the importance Participant 1 placed on accountability in the guidance process. By requiring students to update him monthly, he aimed to foster a structured environment that encouraged ownership of their work. However, Participant 1 also noted that this strategy depended on the students' willingness to engage, as he was unable to force them to participate in thesis guidance. Some students were involved in other productive activities, such as work or other pursuits, which affected their commitment to the process. The same results were found by Ebadi and Pourahmadi (2019) and Bayona-Oré and Bazan (2020). The majority of students were unable to write continuously due to their employment status, marital or familial status. Consequently, according to Participant 1, there were instances when some students did not contact him for an extended period. This was the rationale behind the strategy employed by Participant 1 to prevent such a situation from occurring.

By implementing this strategy, Participant 1 indicated that he was able to identify difficulties experienced by students in their writing through monitoring their development and progress. This enabled him to provide solutions or motivation to help students overcome these difficulties. This was in line with the supervisor's roles described by Brown and Atkins (1988), which included guiding students, providing encouragement and discussing ideas, and managing progress by checking regularly and monitoring study.

In addition, according to Baydarova et. al. (2021), when the supervisor was more supportive and constantly updated the student, it created continuous motivation for the student's research. In terms of the expectation to monitor students' progress, Stappenbelt and Basu (2019) found that both supervisors and students exhibited a moderate level of agreement that it was the responsibility of the supervisor to ensure that the student was on track and working consistently. However, the results also indicated that a considerable number of supervisors and students held the expectation that students were fully responsible for how they spent their time and had to monitor their own progress. According to Arjulayana et. al. (2024), students who demonstrated good self-discipline, responsibility, and creativity were able to complete their theses successfully and graduate on time. They concluded that students'

 DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.30998/scope.v9i2.24504

metacognition was fostered when they developed an awareness of their self-discipline and established effective communication patterns with their advisors. Furthermore, as stated in Febrianti et. al. (2023), good communication between student and supervisor was one of the most important factors in determining the success of the project proposal and the overall research project. It can be postulated that when the supervisors and students held similar expectations and exhibited good responsibility, the thesis completion was more likely to be achieved.

To sum up, the establishment of consultation regulations necessitating the monthly reporting of progress by students can prove an efficacious strategy for a number of reasons. Firstly, the imposition of a monthly reporting obligation ensures that students provide consistent updates on their thesis progress. Such a system enables the supervisor to remain apprised of the student's work and any potential issues that may arise. Secondly, the provision of regular progress reports allows the supervisor to provide timely feedback, address issues at an early stage and offer guidance in a more effective manner. Such a system helps to prevent minor issues from becoming significant problems at a later stage. Thirdly, the obligation to report one's progress fosters a sense of accountability. Such a system encourages students to remain on schedule with their research and to adhere to deadlines. Fourthly, regular check-ins can help to circumvent a last-minute rush before submission. It is more likely that students will manage their time effectively when they are aware that they are required to report their progress on a regular basis. Fifthly, the submission of a monthly report facilitates ongoing communication between the supervisor and the student. This enables questions to be addressed, support to be provided and ensures alignment with academic standards. Finally, this strategy provides a structured framework for the student's work, assisting them in organizing their research activities and setting achievable milestones. However, the process must be manageable and feedback should be prompt and constructive in order to optimize its benefits.

4. Sending Theses Drafts via Email

The fourth strategy was sending theses drafts via email. Two participants revealed that sending the theses drafts via email was the most preferred strategy. According to Participant 2, the use of email was more effective than other applications such as WhatsApp, while Participant 3 stated that she prioritized sending theses drafts via email because it allowed her to free up her own time, enabling her to read her students' theses flexibly, either at night or even early in the morning. When students requested a face-to-face meeting, she had to set a certain time. The following were responses from participant who supported this strategy.

> I prefer to send it by email so that I can read. Sometimes they send also by WhatsApp. Sending to email is more effective rather than sending it by WhatsApp. Why WhatsApp is not effective at all because sometimes the file, if it is not opened, it cannot be opened later on. So, I always ask the students send it by email (Participant 2).
>
> … I usually put aside Monday for face-to-face consultation if the students want it. If not, I would say just send me a draft via email, then I will read it. And then, if I think we need to meet, then we will make an appointment. If not, then I will give my feedback online also. I give it always online first because then I can take my own time like when they send it in the morning, I can read it at night or even early in the morning, but if they demand face to face then I have to set a certain time, right? So, for me, it is more flexible sending it online (Participant 3).

Participant 2's statement underscored her preference for receiving thesis drafts via email, as it ensured compatibility and reliability in accessing the files, which could be problematic when using applications like WhatsApp. This highlighted her focus on maintaining a smooth workflow and minimizing technical issues. Meanwhile, Participant 3's commitment to designating Mondays for face-to-face consultations reflected her flexibility in accommodating students' needs while also prioritizing her time management. Together, this strategy demonstrated how both participants valued structured communication and efficient use of time in the thesis guidance process.

Regarding the way of providing feedback via email, Participant 2 indicated that she requested the students submitted their theses in the form of Google Documents, whereas Participant 3 requested that the students submitted their theses in the form of Microsoft Word documents. Subsequently, they provided written feedback on the documents. Satriani et. al. (2023) also found that the supervisors provided feedback through Microsoft Word and Google Documents when conducting online thesis supervision. With regard to written feedback, Shinta et. al. (2023) found that students required clear and detailed feedback in written form. They found it difficult to identify their own errors with indirect feedback that only located and indicated errors. Feedback in the form of questions was also considered insufficient, as it did not provide sufficient clues for students to make use of the feedback for their learning and improvement. The findings of Nangimah and

Walldén (2023) were corroborated by the observation that only a minority of students perceived feedback in the form of questions to be beneficial and constructive for contextualizing and developing their writing. In the event that the students found the feedback to be unclear, they sent a text message to the participants.

In certain instances, following the submission of the students' theses to the participants' email addresses and the provision of feedback, face-to-face and/or virtual meetings were held. Participant 2 shared her experiences, indicating that if she had a lot to say after reading the students' theses, she requested that they met with her in person or via a virtual meeting. In another instance, when the students required more detailed feedback, they texted her and requested a face-to-face meeting. The results of Arianto and Wulyani (2022) also demonstrated that students who met with their supervisors after receiving feedback did so. One student stated that he met with his supervisor in person after becoming confused while reading the written feedback. They engaged in a detailed discussion about the suggestions made.

To sum up, the practice of requesting students to send their thesis drafts via email can prove an effective strategy for a supervisor in ensuring the timely provision of feedback, while simultaneously managing a substantial workload. This strategy enables the supervisor to read and review theses at times that suit their schedule, such as in the evenings or early mornings, without the constraints of scheduled face-to-face meetings. By receiving drafts in electronic format, the supervisor is able to allocate time more efficiently and provide feedback on a flexible schedule. Furthermore, this strategy allows the supervisor to determine the necessity for more comprehensive discussions. In instances where extensive feedback is required or if students request more detailed guidance, the supervisor can arrange face-to-face or virtual meetings as necessary.

The combination of email feedback with optional meetings strikes a balance between efficiency and the need for personal interaction, making it a practical solution for the guidance of a large number of students and the assurance of timely and constructive feedback. The combination of email feedback with face-to-face or virtual meetings entails a significant investment of time and resources on the part of the supervisor. The process of providing comprehensive feedback through this strategy can be particularly demanding when faced with a heavy workload. The supervisor is required to dedicate time to the review of thesis drafts sent via email. Subsequently, time is spent on the composition and transmission of detailed feedback. Furthermore, additional time is necessary for the scheduling and facilitation of face-to-face or virtual meetings, during which feedback can be discussed in detail or specific queries addressed.

To manage the increased workload associated with providing both email feedback and face-to-face or virtual meetings, supervisors can implement several strategies. Providing structured and clear feedback through email can minimize the need for follow-up meetings by addressing common issues comprehensively. Establishing specific office hours for meetings helps in managing time efficiently. Prioritizing meetings for cases where detailed discussion is essential ensures that time is used effectively. Utilizing feedback templates or guidelines can streamline the feedback process. By adopting these strategies, supervisors can balance their workload while still offering thorough and timely support to their students.

5. Scheduling Specific Times for Providing Feedback

The fifth strategy was scheduling specific times for providing feedback. Almeatani et. al. (2019) observed that in certain instances, students submitted their work and supervisors took a considerable length of time to provide feedback and approval. In response to this situation, scheduling specific times for providing feedback was identified as a strategy that could be employed by supervisors to ensure that students did not have to wait an excessive length of time. The participants in this research indicated that they set aside one week as the timeframe for providing feedback, unless there was a significant number of activities that required additional time. This demonstrated that the participants provided the students with feedback in expected time, within a period of no more than three weeks. The responses of the participants in favor of this strategy were as follows:

> … I give the deadline myself not more than a week to send the feedback, to give the students feedback. … (Participant 2).
> … 'At least one week for supervision.' Sometimes when there are a lot of activities, like now, we are nearing the final test or last time we had the mid-term test, I would take more. … (Participant 3).

Participant 2's assertion, "I give the deadline myself not more than a week to send the feedback," reflected a proactive approach to feedback management. By setting a personal deadline, Participant 2 emphasized the importance of timely responses and created a sense of accountability in the supervisory relationship. This strategy helped to alleviate student anxiety about waiting for crucial feedback, fostering a more supportive environment for their academic growth. Similarly, Participant 3's statement, "At least one week for supervision. Sometimes, when there

DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.30998/scope.v9i2.24504

are a lot of activities, …, I would take more," highlighted the balance that supervisors strived to maintain between their commitments and the needs of their students. Participant 3 acknowledged that while a one-week timeframe was ideal, flexibility was necessary during busier periods. This adaptability ensured that students still received thoughtful and constructive feedback, even when the supervisor's schedule was demanding.

These insights illustrated the participants' commitment to timely and effective communication in the thesis guidance process, aligning with the findings of Teklesellassie (2019). The research showed that the majority of supervisors responded to students' drafts within a timeframe of one to two weeks. This also aligned with the recommendations set forth by Imperial College London (2017), which delineated a list of minimum expectations for both students and supervisors. These expectations aimed to facilitate constructive conversations and establish effective student-supervisor partnerships. One of the expectations was that supervisors were being available to students, normally for at least one hour per week (on average). This might take the form of individual meetings (tutorials), group meetings or laboratory meetings, email or Skype. Meanwhile, students were expected to be punctual and prepared for meetings (tutorials), seminars and any other arranged activities.

In short, the implementation of scheduling specific times for providing feedback represents an effective strategy for supervisors operating within heavy workload. This strategy facilitates structured time management, thereby enabling the supervisors to organize their schedule and guarantee the timely provision of feedback. Furthermore, it offers students a degree of predictability, which enables them to plan their work and manage expectations. A dedicated feedback period allows the supervisors to focus exclusively on the review and commentary of thesis work, which can result in more considered and comprehensive feedback. Furthermore, this strategy allows for flexibility in the event of an increased workload, although it may have potential drawbacks. In the event that students have urgent issues or require rapid feedback, a rigid one-week schedule may prove to be too inflexible. Furthermore, if a significant number of students are scheduled within the same week, the quality of feedback may be adversely affected. Overall, this strategy helps to prevent burnout and maintain a balanced workload, though it is essential to avoid delays in critical situations and to ensure that the quality of feedback is not compromised by the volume of students.

6. Requesting Students to Provide Reminders

The last strategy was requesting students to provide reminders. The participants scheduled specific times for providing feedback within one week, unless there were numerous activities that necessitated additional time. In the event that the supervisors were unable to provide feedback within the specified timeframe, Participant 2 revealed that the students contacted her via text message when no feedback was provided more than a week after the deadline. She requested them to persist in contacting her if she did not respond to their thesis submissions. In a different instance, Participant 3 disclosed that when her schedule was particularly demanding, she requested the students to remind her within a week's time. A similar strategy was employed when the students proposed a face-to-face meeting, as Participant 3 required time to read the students' theses before conducting the meeting. As an illustrative example, Monday morning of the subsequent week was selected by Participant 3 and the students. Participant 3 requested that the students text her via WhatsApp on Monday morning. In the event that she did not complete the review of the student submissions on that morning, Participant 3 informed the students accordingly. The following are participants' statements regarding this strategy.

> … Sometimes if it is more than a week, the students will text me. This is a soft reminder, and I ask them, 'Okay, remind me. I have not answered anything of your thesis (Participant 2).
> … I will say, 'Remind me in one week's time so if we need to meet then let's meet on Monday morning, please chat me or text me via WhatsApp. If I have not finished reading your draft, then I will tell you (Participant 3).'

Participant 2's statement illustrated her understanding of the importance of communication and accountability in the feedback process. By inviting students to send reminders, Participant 2 fostered an environment where students felt comfortable reaching out, ensuring that feedback remained a priority despite her busy schedule. This approach not only emphasized her commitment to timely feedback but also acknowledged the collaborative nature of the supervisor-student relationship. Participant 3's remark further demonstrated her proactive strategy for managing feedback sessions. By encouraging students to initiate reminders, Participant 3 reinforced the importance of mutual communication and planning, allowing for a structured and effective approach to guidance. Her willingness to inform students if she hadn't finished their drafts reflected a transparent and supportive dynamic. These insights aligned with the findings reported by Nurkamto and Prihandoko (2022), which indicated that supervisors frequently requested students to send them reminders whenever necessary.

In brief, requesting students to provide reminder if no feedback is given within a week can be an effective strategy for ensuring timely feedback while managing heavy workloads. This strategy places some responsibility on the students to follow up, which can help keep the supervisor accountable and ensure that feedback is not overlooked. However, there are potential drawbacks to consider. Relying on students to send reminders might result in delays if students forget or are hesitant to follow up. Moreover, students may feel uncomfortable about needing to remind their supervisor. To mitigate these issues, clear communication about the reminder process and ensuring that students feel comfortable sending reminders are important.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the participants employed six strategies to ensure giving feedback during thesis guidance alongside their heavy workload. The strategies included holding face-to-face meetings, conducting virtual meetings, establishing consultation regulations, sending theses via email, scheduling specific times for providing feedback, and requesting students to provide reminders. The strategies proposed offered insights for other supervisors who were dealing with the heavy workload alongside thesis guidance. However, it was crucial to acknowledge the findings of Chugh et. al. (2022), which indicated that there was no single feedback strategy that was universally effective in all situations. Furthermore, they concluded from the previous literature that supervisors were required to be flexible and to adapt their approaches, including their feedback, to the specific needs and requirements of the situation.

Limitations

The current research was limited to investigating supervisors' perspectives. Future research projects could examine students' perceptions of supervisors' strategies. Other limitations of this research included a relatively small sample size and the limited nature of the data collected. The sample consisted of only three supervisors, all of whom were in English Language Education. Future research could expand the sample size and investigate supervisors across multiple disciplines (e.g., Economics, Engineering, Mathematics and Science, Psychology Education, Sport Science, etc.).

REFERENCE

Abrar, M., Fajaryani, N., Hutabarat, R. R., Failasofah., & Masbirorotni. (2023). EFL student teachers' experiences in writing their undergraduate theses in Jambi. *Indonesian Journal of English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics, 7*(2), 401-416.

Adenagbe, O. A., Edafiogho, O. A., & Olofin, S. O. (2021). Supervision and workload as determinants of postgraduate theses quality in Ondo state universities. *Euro Global Contemporary Studies Journal, 1*(2), 1-9. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.5048498

Almeatani, M., Alotaibi, H., Alasmari, E., & Meccawy, M. (2019). Thesis supervision mobile system for enhancing student-supervisor communication. International Journal of Interactive Mobile Technologies, 13(6), 4-14. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.5048498

Arianto, M. A., & Wulyani, A. N. (2022). Self-Regulated Writing (SRW) strategies during the completion of dissertation: a case study. *Cakrawala Pendidikan: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan, 41*(1), 154-169. http://dx.doi.org/10.21831/cp.v41i1.40687

Arjulayana., Lastari, D. S., & Al-Manar, A. (2024). English department students' metacognition awareness in completing mini-thesis. *Journal of English Education and Teaching (JEET), 8*(1), 15-32. https://doi.org/10.33369/jeet.8.1.15-32

Ary, D., Jacobs, L. C., Sorensen, C., & Razavieh, A. (2010). *Introduction to research in education*. Wadsworth.

Bahtilla, M. (2022). Supervisory feedback: supervisors' reasons for not giving timely feedback. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, 1-12. https://doi.org/10.1080/14703297.2022.2083656

Bahtilla, M., & Oben, A.I. (2021). International students' perception of research supervision in the Social Sciences: the case of three comprehensive universities in China. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 1-14. https://doi.org/10.1080/0309877X.2021.1945554

Bakhou, B., & Bouhania, B. (2020). A qualitative inquiry into the difficulties experienced by Algerian EFL master students in thesis writing: 'Language is not the only problem'. *Arab World English Journal, 11*(2), 243-257. https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol11no2.17

Bastola, M. N. (2021). Formulation of feedback comments: insights from supervisory feedback on master's theses. *Innovation in Education and Teaching International, 58*(5), 565-574. https://doi.org/10.1080/14703297.2020.1804985

Bastola, M. N. (2022). Engagement and challenges in supervisory feedback: supervisors' and students' perceptions. *RELC Journal, 53*(1), 56-70. doi:10.1177/0033688220912547

Bastola, M. N., & Hu, G. (2023). From the other side of desk: supervisors' perceptions of supervisory feedback. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 59*, 1-16. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2023.100965

Bayona-Oré, S., & Bazan, C. (2020). Why students find it difficult to finish their theses?. *Journal of Turkish Science Education, 17*(4), 591-602. https://doi.org/10.36681/tused.2020.47

Baydarova, I., Collins, H. E., & Saadi, I. A. (2021). Alignment of doctoral student and supervisor expectations in Malaysia. *International Journal of Doctoral Studies, 16*, 1-29. https://doi.org/10.28945/4682

Berg, B. L. (2001). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences.* Allyn & Bacon.

Brown, G., & Atkins, M. (1988). *Effective teaching in higher education.* Routledge.

Carter, S., & Kumar, V. (2017). 'Ignoring me is part of learning': supervisory feedback on doctoral writing. *Innovation in Education and Teaching International, 54*(1), 68-75. https://doi.org/10.1080/14703297.2015.1123104

Chugh, R., Macht, S., & Harreveld, B. (2022). Supervisory feedback to postgraduate research students: a literature review. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education, 47*(5), 683-697. https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2021.1955241

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2007). *Research methods in education.* Routledge.

Creswell, J.W. (2012). *Educational research*. Pearson.

Dowling, R., & Wilson, M. (2015). Digital doctorates? An exploratory study of Phd candidates' use of online tools. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International, 54*(1), 1-11. https://doi.org/10.1080/14703297.2015.1058720

Ebadi, S., & Pourahmadi, F. (2019). Exploring challenges in writing EFL master theses: students and supervisors' perspectives. *i-manager's Journal on English Language Teaching, 9*(2), 42-51. https://doi.org/10.26634/jelt.9.2.15431

Febrianti, Y., Navitas, P., & Winaris, N. (2023). Communication dynamics between first-year doctoral students and supervisors. *Jurnal ILMU KOMUNIKASI, 20*(2), 169-184. https://doi.org/10.24002/jik.v20i2.5735

Gezahegn, T. H., & Gedamu, A. D. (2023). Supervisors' and supervisees' perception and perceived practice of a process-oriented thesis written feedback: the case of Ethiopian universities. *Heliyon, 9*(1), 1-13. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2023.e12865

Imperial College London. (2017, July). *Mutual expectations for the research degree student supervisor partnership*. https://www.imperial.ac.uk/media/imperial-college/faculty-of-engineering/electrical-and-electronic-engineering/public/phd/PhD-Student-Supervisor-Partnership.pdf

Marhaban, S., Puspitasari, Y., Mukminatein, N., Widiati, U., Sulistyo, T., Suhastyanang, W. D., & Muslem, A. (2021). Strategies employed by EFL doctoral candidates in dissertation completion. *Studies in English Language and Education, 8*(2), 546-560. https://doi.org/10.24815/SIELE.V8I2.17694

Nangimah, M., & Walldén, R. (2023). How supervisors provide and students react to EAL thesis supervision: voices from Sweden and Indonesia. *Front. Educ., 8*, 1-15. https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2023.1118436

Nurkamto, J., Djatmika., & Prihandoko, L. A. (2022). Students' problems of academic writing competencies, challenges in online thesis supervision, and the solutions: thesis supervisors' perspectives. *TEFLIN, 33*(1), 123-147. http://dx.doi.org/10.15639/teflinjournal.v33i1/123-147

Rahardjo, D. (2021). Documenting communications and communicating documents: developing thesis online supervising in distance education. *IKOMIK: Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi dan Informasi, 1*(2), 79-84. https://doi.org/10.33830/ikomik.v1i2.2379

Republik Indonesia. 2012. *Undang-undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 12 Tahun 2012 tentang Pendidikan Tinggi.* Kementerian Riset, Teknologi, dan Pendidikan Tinggi. Jakarta.

Rugut, C. K., & Chang'ach, J. (2023). Voices of supervisors on thesis supervision practices in universities in Kenya. *The Educator, 3*(1), 128-149.

Safitri, C. D., Azisah, S., & Nur, M. J. A. (2021). The analysis of students' challenges to thesis writing at UIN Alauddin Makassar. *English Language Teaching for EFL Learners, 3*(2), 41-53. https://doi.org/10.24252/elties.v3i2.21013

Satriani, I., Resmini, S., & Fauziah, U. N. E. (2023). The online mini thesis supervision: students' perception. *Biormatika: Jurnal Ilmiah Fakultas Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan, 9*(1), 45-52.

Shinta, L. G. B., Astuti, U. P., & Ariani, N. (2023). College students' preferences for written corrective feedback. *ELT Forum, 12*(2), 74-89.

Sitompul, S. S., & Anditasari, A. W. (2022). Challenges in writing academic research: an exploration of master's students' experiences. *Getsempena English Education Journal, 9*(2), 136-148. https://doi.org/10.46244/geej.v9i2.1805

Stappenbelt, B., & Basu, A. (2019). Student-supervisor-university expectation in alignment in the undergraduate engineering thesis. *Journal of Teaching and Sciences Education, 9*(2), 199-216. https://doi.org/10.3926/jotse.482

Suparman, U. (2021). The implementation of the online thesis supervision during pandemic covid-19 at one of graduate and postgraduate programs in Indonesia. *AKSARA: Jurnal Bahasa dan Sastra, 22*(1), 43-53. https://doi.org/10.23960/AKSARA%2FV22I1.PP43-53

Taylor, S., Kiley, M., & Humphrey, R. (2018). *A handbook for doctoral supervisors.* Routledge.

Teklesellassie, Y. (2019). Views of summer TEFL postgraduate students and their supervisors on thesis supervision in the Ethiopian context. *PASAA, 58*(1), 131-165. doi:10.58837/CHULA.PASAA.58.1.6

Tladi, L. L., & Seretse, T. E. (2021). Students' perceptions of postgraduate research supervision at Botswana Open University. *Progressio, 42*, 1-18. https://doi.org/10.25159/2663-5895/10001

Zaheer, M., & Munir, S. (2020). Research supervision in distance learning: issues and challenges. *Asian Association of Open Universities Journal, 15*(1), 131-143. https://doi.org/10.1108/AAOUJ-01-2020-0003