Pertanika J. Soc. Sci. & Hum. 34 (S4): 87 - 106 (2026)

PERTANIKA JOURNALS

SOCIAL SCIENCES & HUMANITIES

Journal homepage: http://www.pertanika.upm.edu.my/

Final Project Guidance Patterns in Graduate Schools: Students and Lecturers Perspectives

Adi Atmoko[1], Ade Eka Anggraini[1], Nanda Alfan Kurniawan[2*], Radeni Sukma Indra Dewi[1], and Oktaviani Adhi Suciptaningsih[1]

[1]Department of Indonesian Language for Other Speakers, School of Post Graduate Studies, Universitas Negeri Malang, 65145 Malang, Indonesia
[2]Guidance and Counseling Study Program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Mulawarman, 75242 Samarinda, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

The Director General of Indonesian Higher Education regulates the completion of postgraduate course final assignments in four semesters (thesis) and six semesters (dissertation). Final assignment guidance is followed by students starting from the second semester of study with the lecturer according to the faculty's decision. The pattern of final assignment supervision influences student graduation success. The aim of this research is to explore the experiences of students and lecturers in the process of completing final assignments. The research method uses a qualitative approach with the Narrative Inquiry method. The data collection technique used in-depth interviews was conducted with 7 students who were completing their final assignments and 3 postgraduate lecturers. The data analysis technique uses qualitative content analysis. Multidisciplinary theory is used to contextualise research findings. The main finding of this research is the need for a multidisciplinary-based guidance pattern to accommodate the acceleration of completing students' final assignments. Furthermore, the results of this research explain how students experience taking part in final assignment supervision with their supervisor. The research findings also show that students and lecturers believe that multidisciplinary patterns have the potential to be implemented with promising success. This study found that the multidisciplinary pattern in final assignment supervision is most important for students to use when determining research titles, research reference sources, selecting supervisors, and scheduling final assignment guidance.

Keywords: Final project, graduate schools, postgraduate

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:
Received: 13 July 2025
Accepted: 10 July 2026
Published: 25 September 2026

DOI: https://doi.org/10.47836/pjssh.34.S4.05

E-mail addresses:
adi.atmoko.fip@um.ac.id (Adi Atmoko)
ade.ekaanggraini.pasca@um.ac.id (Ade Eka Anggraini)
nandaalfankurniawan@fkip.unmul.ac.id (Nanda Alfan Kurniawan)
radenisukmaindradewi.pasca@um.ac.id (Radeni Sukma Indra Dewi)
oktaviani.suciptaningsih.pasca@um.ac.id (Oktaviani Adhi Suciptaningsih)
* Corresponding author

e-ISSN: 2231-8534

© Universiti Putra Malaysia Press

INTRODUCTION

Completing a final project at a high level is not only an academic issue, but also closely related to students' readiness to face psychological, social, and institutional pressures (Cole et al., 2004; Cordeiro et al., 2022; Lowe & Cook, 2003). Various studies have shown that students are susceptible to academic and emotional burnout during the mentoring process, particularly during the thesis or dissertation writing stage (Sverdlik et al., 2018). Therefore, the mentoring pattern implemented by the supervisor significantly contributes to students' success in completing their studies on time (Bagaka's et al., 2015; Jacobi, 1991; Rodger & Tremblay, 2003). Therefore, exploring effective mentoring patterns is crucial for improving the quality of continuing education (Andersen & West, 2020).

The reality of the climate in higher education in the last two years shows a trend that focuses more on developing students' research skills rather than professional or transferable skills regarding study completion and has been ongoing in higher education practice for many years (Guo et al., 2020; Viberg et al., 2018). Meanwhile, the condition of postgraduate students in higher education is easily stressed due to life changes, study pressures, and financial independence (He et al., 2023). This condition can be observed from the beginning when prospective postgraduate students face a dilemma in determining the university of their choice when registering for master's and doctoral programmes (Acharya et al., 2019). Experiences of life in college such as individual differences and demographic factors, as outlined above, may also inform and influence students' expectations of personal guidance in higher education (Yale, 2019).

Facing challenges in completing students' final assignments, a special support programme is needed that is appropriate to the students' conditions. Research results show structured coaching approaches can increase retention and degree completion (Blakeslee et al., 2022), while whole-class approaches to co-creation have the potential to engage students more than other approaches (Bovill, 2020), and genre-based approaches to guide students in writing final assignment introductions (Stapa et al., 2014). Social factors such as support systems have been found to play an important role in academic achievement in college (Mishra, 2020). Other research findings suggest family emotional support plays an important role in promoting positive academic outcomes (Roksa & Kinsley, 2019).

In addition to psychological factors, the dynamics of the relationship between students and their supervisors are also influenced by academic culture and institutional structures. In some Asian countries, strong hierarchical relationships between lecturers and students can hinder open communication, thus impacting the smooth running of the mentoring process (Lee, 2018). Conversely, in Western academic traditions, a collaborative approach is emphasised to encourage

students to develop research independence. This suggests that mentoring patterns are not universal and need to be tailored to the socio-cultural context and the student's academic needs.

Current scientific developments also demand a multidisciplinary approach in the preparation of final assignments. Students are no longer satisfied with mastering a single field of study; they are also required to be able to integrate various disciplines to address complex issues facing society (Jacobs & Frickel, 2009). In this context, mentoring patterns involving cross-disciplinary approaches are crucial for enriching students' perspectives in designing research and writing scientific papers. Thus, the implementation of a multidisciplinary mentoring pattern has the potential not only to accelerate study completion but also to improve the academic quality of graduates.

Higher education institutions and the academic community ensure graduation for students who are actively registered and carry out their studies to completion (Setiawan et al., 2024; Tight, 2020). Following international movements in recent decades, changes have been found in the way lectures are delivered in higher education, from traditional instructor-based teaching models to active, student-centred learning experiences (Murillo-Zamorano et al., 2019). Interaction with other people (for example, supervisors, theorists) in the context of preparing a final assignment can develop students' epistemology (Xu & Zhang, 2019). Social interactions with others writing in the same genre serve as opportunities to better understand these relationships (Mochizuki, 2019).

Parameters of student study success can be viewed from several domains. Study success includes successful completion of a first degree in higher education to the greatest extent, and successful completion of individual study assignments to the smallest extent (Ifenthaler & Yau, 2020). The potential influence of data mining analytics on student learning processes and outcomes has been realized in higher education as a material for institutional development (Aldowah et al., 2019).

Furthermore, institutional support through regulations, resources, and monitoring systems is also a key factor in students' success in completing their final project. A study by Bitzer (2011) showed that the success of postgraduate programmes is largely determined by institutional policies that provide academic, administrative, and emotional support for students. Therefore, this study is relevant because it provides an empirical overview of the experiences of students and supervisors in navigating the multidisciplinary final project guidance process, as well as how this pattern can be optimised in the context of higher education in Indonesia

METHODOLOGY

Participants

The qualitative observational study in this research was carried out through in-depth interviews with 7 students (3 Masters/ master's and 4 Doctorates/Doctorates) and 3 postgraduate lecturers as supervisors at

one of the state universities in East Java. The inclusion criteria for participants in this study were as follows: (a) having an academic diagnosis recommended by a postgraduate lecturer, (b) being currently in their early, middle, or final semesters, (c) residing in Malang, Indonesia, and (d) possessing the ability to read, comprehend, and write a final assignment. Additionally, all research communications were conducted in Indonesian. This research received approval from the Postgraduate Director of the State University of Malang (05/2023) and all interview participants filled in their identification and agreed after the research objectives were explained to them. There is no fixed sample size, and interviews are conducted until saturation of interview topics is reached, namely a multidisciplinary-based final assignment (thesis/dissertation) guidance pattern. All in-depth interview results were read repeatedly until they found "threads" in the term of narrative inquiry as a replacement for the word "theme" in the interview results.

Instruments

The final project performance scale can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1
Multidisciplinary based final project (thesis/dissertation) guidance service performance scale

Aspect	Indicator	Score			
		1	2	3	4
Man	I master passive English				
	I have limitations in finding references to compose my final assignment	□	□	□	□
	My motivation to complete my final assignment changed	□	□	□	□
	I carefully read every part of the final assignment before submitting it to my supervisor	□	□	□	□
	The supervisor observes the student's strengths during the process of preparing the final assignment (thesis/ dissertation)	□	□	□	□
	The supervisor observes the student's progress and success during the process of preparing the final assignment (thesis/ dissertation)	□	□	□	□
	The supervisor observes the student's progress and success, and conveys appreciation (reward) for the performance in preparing the final assignment (thesis/dissertation) to increase the student's self-efficacy	□	□	□	□
	The supervisor motivates students to take immediate action (revise, read references, etc.).	□	□	□	□
Material	I don't understand the procedure for writing a final assignment	□	□	□	□
	I experienced difficulties in collecting research data	□	□	□	□
	The tuition fees are born independently by me	□	□	□	□

Table 1 *(continued)*

Aspect	Indicator	Score			
		1	2	3	4
	I read and consistently follow the Guidelines for Writing Scientific Papers (PPKI) and the General Guidelines for Indonesian Spelling (PUEBI).	□	□	□	□
	I read the latest theories, scientific journals and research methods and use relevant primary sources that support the completeness of research data	□	□	□	□
	I create a realistic plan that is approved by all supervisors, and consistently carry it out	□	□	□	□
Method	My research methodology is weak	□	□	□	□
	My research analysis is weak	□	□	□	□
	I consult with all supervisors intensively, both regularly and incidentally, including when preparing the methodology	□	□	□	□
	Supervisors serve student consultations wholeheartedly	□	□	□	□
Machine	I can carry out data analysis independently	□	□	□	□
	The requirements for my final project proposal are incomplete	□	□	□	□
	I went through two activities together, namely working while compiling the final assignment	□	□	□	□
	I maintain the quality of both technical and substantive conceptual aspects of research	□	□	□	□
	I continuously document the guidance process for preparing my final project (Thesis/Dissertation) in the guidance recording format that has been provided	□	□	□	□
	I am more independent and prioritise completing the preparation of my final project (Thesis/Dissertation) rather than other tasks/activities	□	□	□	□

The performance scale presented in Table 1 serves as a self-evaluation instrument to assess students' progress and readiness in completing their final projects across the four identified parameters. Following this assessment, in-depth interviews were conducted with the students using a structured interview rubric, which is detailed in Table 2.

Table 2 shows a list of interviews aimed at postgraduate students. Meanwhile, the interview rubric for lecturers selected as final assignment supervisors based on postgraduate recommendations can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3 is a list of questions for supervisors who are assigned to accompany the completion of graduate students' final assignments. This interview rubric is open because informants can convey real information. This qualitative approach aims not only to focus on one aspect of information at one time, but to allow the story to flow and develop to produce in-depth exploration. Posterior inductive analysis was used to determine main themes,

Table 2
List of interview questions for students

No	Question
1	Please tell us about your experience in general, about the guidance you have experienced (about feelings, relationships with the supervisor, institutional support, guidance guidelines, smoothness, expectations, etc.)!
2	Please tell us about how you plan to complete your thesis/dissertation in the Basic Education Postgraduate Programme!
3	Please tell us what difficulties you experienced while completing your thesis/dissertation in the Basic Education Postgraduate Programme!
4	How does your supervisor provide services regarding completing your thesis/dissertation in the Basic Education Postgraduate Programme?
5	Does your supervisor have a special approach to support the completion of your thesis/dissertation? Please explain it to us.
6	What do you think about the guidance pattern from supervisors who practice this pattern in the process of completing your thesis/dissertation?
7	Tell us about your obstacles/difficulties when following the guidance pattern implemented by your supervisor? Please explain your argument regarding this to us!
8	Tell us your opinion or suggestion regarding the guidance pattern for completing a thesis/dissertation so that it is completed/graduated on time in the Basic Education Postgraduate Programme?
9	Tell us your opinion or suggestion regarding guidance with a multidisciplinary approach in the thesis/dissertation completion process?

Table 3
List of interview questions for lecturers

No	Question
1	Please tell us about your experiences in general, regarding the guidance you have experienced/carried out to students (about feelings, relationships with students, institutional support, guidance guidelines, smooth running, hopes, etc.)
2	Please tell us about how you plan to supervise your thesis/dissertation in the Postgraduate Programme, Basic Education Study Programme
3	Please tell us what difficulties you experienced during your thesis/dissertation supervision in the Postgraduate Programme, Basic Education Study Programme
4	How do students participate in guidance services for completing their thesis/dissertation in the Postgraduate Programme, Basic Education Study Programme?
5	Do you have a special pattern of approach for thesis/dissertation guidance? Please explain it to us.
6	What do you think about students' responses to the guidance pattern from you who practice this pattern in the process of completing a thesis/dissertation?
7	Tell me about your obstacles/difficulties when implementing this guidance pattern? Please explain it to us.
8	Tell us your opinion or suggestion regarding the guidance pattern for completing a thesis/dissertation so that it is completed/graduated on time in the Postgraduate Programme, Basic Education Study Programme.
9	Tell me your opinion or suggestion regarding guidance with a multidisciplinary approach in the thesis/dissertation completion process?

Table 4
Thematic analysis phase

Thematic Analysis Phase	Description
Phase I	Familiarisation with the data: transcriptions of all interviews were revised for corrections (472 ± 1398 words per interview, mean ± standard deviation).
Phase II	Generating initial codes: a list of 7 codes was generated (e.g. general experience, planning for completing the final project, difficulties, opinions about the supervisor, opinions about the supervisor's pattern, difficulties following the supervisor's pattern, suggestions for the best mentoring pattern, comments about the multidisciplinary approach).
Phase III	Theme search: revision and analysis of interrelated text segments and codes resulted in a first draft of 4 themes (e.g., general experiences, study planning, experiences with supervisors, and diagnosis of a multidisciplinary approach).
Phase IV	Reviewing themes: literacy posterior review of themes and text segments led to a reduction in the number of themes from 7 to 4.
Phase V	Defining and naming themes: the "define and refine" approach described by Braun and Clarke (2006) led to the suggestion and definition of two main themes for analysis, as explained in the Results section below.
Phase VI	Report generation: results as described in the Results and Discussion section below correspond to this phase.

subthemes, relationships between them, and perceptions of temporal changes. A single meeting per participant was conducted, ranging in duration from 50 minutes to 1 hour 50 minutes. Participants answered questions freely in their own words, and follow-up questions were used to clarify unclear descriptions. Interviews were conducted in Indonesian and Javanese.

Data analysis uses thematic analysis techniques following Braun and Clarke's guidelines (Braun & Clarke, 2006), The thematic analysis technique is carried out in six phases of an iterative process which aims to identify and analyse patterns (themes) in the qualitative data collection resulting from in-depth interviews between researchers and interview participants until consensus is reached (Lupón et al., 2023). The thematic analysis phase is seen in Table 4.

Table 4 shows the thematic analysis phases based on Braun and Clarke's guidelines (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis produces qualitative data as research findings. The analysis, hierarchy of interview themes, and final categories of data were discussed among the authors, and the results were decided upon by consensus.

Procedures

Interview participants were contacted via WhatsApp social media messages to arrange the date, time, and location of each interview, a method chosen for its practicality and accessibility in maintaining communication with postgraduate students who often had busy schedules and resided in diverse regions. All interviews were conducted over a four-month period,

from May 2023 to August 2023, allowing the researchers sufficient time to build rapport with participants and to collect data systematically. During the interview process, data were recorded in handwritten notes using structured interview sheets to ensure that no key information was overlooked and to maintain consistency across respondents. The meetings with interview participants were carefully organised into two sequential parts. First, participants were informed about the overall purpose of the research, including its aims and potential benefits, and were then asked to provide sociodemographic information such as name, gender, study programme, semester level, home address, and contact details (cellphone number/ email). In addition, they were required to submit details of their academic context, including the research title, the name of their supervisor, the duration of their supervision experience, and the status of their final assignment (whether ongoing or completed).

Second, after the demographic and contextual data collection, participants were directed to complete a multidisciplinary-based final project performance scale designed to evaluate their progress in preparing a thesis or dissertation. This instrument consisted of 25 statement items grouped into four key parameters man, material, method, and machine—each representing different aspects of postgraduate academic performance. The "man" parameter assessed personal factors such as motivation, perseverance, and communication skills; "material" evaluated the availability and quality of references, data, and resources used in the research; "method" measured the level of understanding and application of appropriate research methodologies; and "machine" examined the use of technological tools and digital platforms in supporting research activities. By incorporating these four parameters, the instrument provided a holistic framework for understanding the students' competencies and challenges in completing their final assignments. This structured approach not only ensured that the interviews generated rich and comparable data but also allowed the research team to capture the complex interplay between personal, academic, and institutional factors influencing postgraduate study completion.

RESULTS

10 interview participants with inclusion characteristics were interviewed, were in the first, middle and final semesters, and lived in Malang City. Interviews lasted between 50 minutes and 1 hour 50 minutes. Interview analysis determined 4 main themes from 7 themes that had been accumulated in the third phase of thematic analysis. The common thread that underlies and connects these 4 main themes is (1) general experience, (2) study planning, (3) experience with supervisors, and (4) diagnosis of a multidisciplinary approach. The common thread that connects the 4 main themes is time management and discipline towards commitment.

Theme 1 Result: General Experience

Collectively, it is evident from interviews to what extent the experience of Postgraduate Basic Education students is in the process of completing their final assignments. Several students described the general experience that they felt was fun and full of challenges.

> ***A** As an alumnus of the UM Postgraduate School Doctoral Programme, I feel that in the mentoring process, I really enjoyed, enjoyed, and was challenged because I got a lot of useful knowledge from very professional supervisors (E/ Pps/2023)*

> *It takes more patience to contact lecturers. When you get the answer, it's a little bit small. But when he came back, there was more. (RZ/Pps/2023)*

> *In general, when I decided on the title, I changed it two or three times. I had difficulty finding sources and methods; supervisor 1 was more supportive, while supervisor 2 changed many variables and did not provide specific references. And I ended up dominantly following my mentor. (SB/Pps/2023.*

Postgraduate students believe that the journey to complete their final assignment involves various challenges according to their individual circumstances and conditions, both between student and lecturer. A change in research direction was also felt by some students due to differences in research orientation between the students' desires and the research roadmap that supervisors at the Postgraduate School had.

Theme 2 Result: Study Planning

Collectively, it is evident from interviews to what extent the Basic Education Postgraduate students' study planning is in the process of completing their final assignments. Some interview results that illustrate this evidence include:

> *At the beginning of college, I made a list of activities between lectures. Over time, this thesis fell apart due to my own fault due to the PPG schedule, because the PPG schedule had really changed. (SB/Pps/2023)*

> *Supervisors are chosen by students collecting plans and post-determining according to supervisor research umbrellas. And coincidentally, my choice was in accordance with what was granted (RZ/Pps/2023). Planning for preparing a dissertation begins with:*

a. After the supervisor decree was issued, I tried to find the contact numbers of the supervisors and tried to make contact and introduce myself. Tell me who I am, from which agency and convey the dissertation topic plan that will be worked on
b. Receive input and suggestions directed by the supervisor.
c. Immediately look for reference material that can support writing your dissertation.

d. Make progress and quote one day "one-three paragraphs".
e. Consultation with supervisors (target once a week but still respecting the supervisors' busy lives)
f. Manage daily schedules and balance of work and dissertation completion (E/Pps/2023).

Study planning starts from the beginning when postgraduate students programme courses and research plans in the first semester. The research proposal is then reaffirmed in the second semester when students take the research proposal development course for the Masters/master's level and the third semester for the Doctoral/Doctoral level. Determination of research topics and themes is decided based on the results of the Postgraduate mapping which is known to the supervisor and students.

Theme 3 Result: Experience with Mentor

Collectively, it is evident from interviews to what extent the Postgraduate Basic Education students' experience with supervisors in the process of completing their final assignments. Some interview results that illustrate this evidence include:

> *My supervisor provides a good academic atmosphere. We are taught to develop Curiosity. My supervisor has also given me enough time to complete my dissertation. He always monitors the progress of my dissertation from time to time and hopes that I will graduate on time. (E/Pps/2023)*

> *Most of the students' close friends are elementary school teachers, almost from the same class. The relationship with the lecturer is quite familiar; there are some boundaries that need to be maintained. Frequently contact me first every day, last 1 day (RZ/Pps/2023).*

The mentoring activities experienced by students and supervisors fall into a two-way interaction pattern. Students adapt to maintain communication with their respective supervisors. Even though it is found that there are several mentoring processes that run smoothly, there are several different situations experienced by other students when they undergo mentoring activities due to the position of the supervisor and the busyness of their respective roles (between students and lecturers) because most postgraduate students work as teachers. and Lecturer.

Theme 4 Result: Multidisciplinary Approach Diagnosis

Collectively, it is evident from interviews to what extent the diagnosis of a multidisciplinary approach is given to postgraduate students in basic education in the process of completing their final assignments. Some interview results that illustrate this evidence include:

> *I really agree with the consideration of a multidisciplinary approach in completing this dissertation, because I am sure that this approach will be able to encourage students to quickly complete their studies, especially*

in preparing their dissertation. It is believed that this approach will be able to solve complex problems encountered by students. This approach provides a different perspective to create broader possibilities in creating a series of questions in research and developing possible solutions to the problem (E/Pps/2023)

Multidisciplinary potential is carried out not only in the process, but from the dosbing selection period according to the plans of the researchers and lecturers (RZ/Pps/2023).

The perspective of a multidisciplinary approach understood by the informant is an academic system in supervision that allows for more varied interactions in scientific fields between students and supervisors to reach agreement on research proposals and research results at the end of the education programme at the postgraduate school. This knowledge is an initial indication for researchers that a multidisciplinary approach can potentially be applied in the education system at postgraduate schools.

DISCUSSION

The aim of this research is to explore the experiences of students and lecturers regarding a multidisciplinary approach in the final assignment completion process according to the students' and lecturers' views. The results of in-depth interviews that have been collected are then read repeatedly by the researcher until they find meaning according to the information conveyed by the informant and in accordance with the research objectives.

Results Theme 1: General Experience

Postgraduate students at the State University of Malang (UM) come from various regions in East Java, and some live at addresses according to their identities outside the East Java region. The inherent cognitive complexity of postgraduate students, to the assumption that critical thinking does not exist due to cultural background (Lin et al., 2023), to the diversity in the presentation of critical thinking, causes variations in the uniqueness of postgraduate students in participating in study completion activities in higher education.

In line with this, the interview results show that students' experiences in completing final assignments are coloured by a combination of enjoyment, challenge, and tension in navigating the mentoring process. Some students expressed appreciation for professional supervisors who provided knowledge and direction, while others highlighted the difficulty of accessing lecturers, inconsistencies in guidance, and frequent changes in research focus. These findings confirm that postgraduate mentoring is not only an academic process but also involves emotional resilience, adaptability, and negotiation between student expectations and supervisor standards (Hemer, 2012; Wisker, 2012).

Moreover, the experience of changing research titles and directions, as shared by several respondents, illustrates the dynamic

interaction between the individual's academic interests and the institutional research roadmap of the postgraduate school. Such misalignments can generate frustration but also foster growth in academic perseverance and critical engagement with scientific inquiry. Previous studies have noted that supervision often reflects power asymmetries and different epistemological perspectives, which shape how postgraduate students negotiate their research identities (Lee, 2008; Manathunga, 2007). Therefore, postgraduate guidance at UM demonstrates a dual nature: on one hand, it provides opportunities for intellectual enrichment and skills development, while on the other, it poses challenges of adjustment and alignment with supervisors' expectations.

This aligns with the perspective that postgraduate education is inherently situated within a social and cultural context where learning is co-constructed through dialogue, negotiation, and feedback cycles (Carter & Kumar, 2017). Students' reflections on their mentoring journey highlight the importance of building trust, consistency, and clarity of guidance from supervisors. At the same time, students are required to exercise self-regulation, persistence, and critical thinking to manage the complexities of supervision. Thus, the experiences at UM's Postgraduate School underscore the significance of adopting mentoring models that balance academic rigor with empathetic support, ensuring that students are not only guided towards successful thesis completion but also empowered as independent researchers in their respective fields.

Results Theme 2: Study Planning

One of the superior master's qualifications includes assignments involving the preparation of final assignments (Nozal et al., 2013). Programming for postgraduate students' study completion plans is carried out online via the website provided by the higher education institution. The phenomenon of lack of basic education in specialty profiles and doubts about professional development at the second stage (Baranova, et al., 2020). Postgraduate students' study orientations such as acquiring professional competence, struggling to manage various forms of communication, demanding task completion, and confusion of academic roles (Gjestvang et al., 2021). ultimately become references for completing Postgraduate studies.

The interview data reinforce these findings, showing that planning for thesis and dissertation completion is highly influenced by students' ability to manage time, balance professional duties such as PPG (teacher professional training), and adapt to the schedules and expectations of supervisors. For instance, some students admitted that although they had carefully planned their activities at the beginning, external demands disrupted their schedules, forcing them to reorganise priorities and strategies. This highlights the dynamic and fragile nature of study planning among postgraduate students, where professional commitments often intersect with academic responsibilities (Carter & Laurs, 2018).

Furthermore, planning is not merely an individual endeavour but also shaped by

institutional mechanisms, such as supervisor allocation and alignment with research roadmaps. The interviews revealed that students often adapt their study plans to the "research umbrella" of supervisors, underscoring the negotiation process between personal research interests and institutional directions. Such adjustments can foster flexibility but also create dependency, as students feel compelled to follow their supervisors' research orientations. At the same time, effective planning practices—such as proactively contacting supervisors, developing weekly writing targets, and maintaining consistent consultation—show that students who implement structured study plans are more likely to progress steadily. This finding resonates with earlier research emphasising the role of academic self-regulation and proactive communication in ensuring timely completion of postgraduate studies (Pyhältö et al., 2012).

Ultimately, the evidence from UM postgraduate students suggests that successful study planning requires a balance between external structures and internal discipline. While institutional policies, supervisor guidance, and workload distribution set the boundaries of planning, it is students' agency in organising time, setting achievable targets, and maintaining motivation that determines the sustainability of their study completion journey. Therefore, integrating formal academic planning platforms with personalised mentoring approaches can enhance postgraduate students' ability to adapt to shifting circumstances while maintaining long-term focus on their final assignments. This aligns with the perspective that postgraduate education must not only provide academic scaffolding but also develop students' metacognitive skills to manage the complexities of learning, working, and researching simultaneously (Guerin et al., 2015; Kumar & Stracke, 2007).

Results Theme 3: Experiences with Mentors

Postgraduate supervisors and students not only purely carry out their role as academics in higher education, but also actively participate in self-development programmes at higher education level. The available support programmes must not follow a universal approach but must consider the diversity of student profiles as the main basis for improving institutional quality (Cabral & Baptista, 2014).

The routines followed during the final assignment completion process do not always go according to plan at the beginning of the semester. Some of the obstacles experienced by postgraduate students include financial problems because financial assistance is an important modality in increasing success outcomes and reducing affordability concerns for students (Carales, 2020), and interpersonal communication problems that originate from personal conditions, social situations, and linguistic use of the mother tongue. excessive, and class culture (Chand, 2021).

At the same time, interviews revealed that the supervisory relationship plays a

crucial role in mediating these challenges. Students emphasised that supervisors who provide an encouraging academic atmosphere, stimulate curiosity, and consistently monitor progress contribute significantly to students' persistence and timely completion. This aligns with prior research noting that effective supervision fosters students' sense of belonging, confidence, and motivation, which in turn reduces attrition risk and enhances academic resilience (Hemer, 2012; Wisker, 2012).

Moreover, the social dimension of postgraduate life, such as relationships with peers and the nature of interaction with supervisors, also emerged as a vital factor. For example, students often find emotional support and academic reinforcement from peers with similar professional backgrounds, such as elementary school teachers in the case of basic education postgraduates. Meanwhile, the relationship with supervisors is described as both familiar and bounded, suggesting a balance between professional distance and personal accessibility. Research on postgraduate supervision has highlighted the significance of clear communication and negotiated boundaries in building trust and fostering academic independence while avoiding dependency (Lee, 2008; Manathunga, 2007). The students' reflections indicate that supervisors who are approachable and proactive in communication can mitigate feelings of isolation and sustain momentum throughout the thesis process.

In sum, postgraduate students' experiences demonstrate that completing final assignments is not only a matter of intellectual effort but also deeply embedded in financial, social, and supervisory dynamics. Supervisors who combine academic expertise with mentorship qualities are better positioned to help students navigate systemic and personal challenges. Therefore, postgraduate supervision should be understood as a holistic practice, integrating academic monitoring, relational support, and the cultivation of critical inquiry. Such an approach resonates with the broader framework of postgraduate education as a relational and cultural practice, where success depends on the interplay of institutional structures, supervisory practices, and students' agency (Carter & Kumar, 2017; Guerin et al., 2015).

Results Theme 4: Multidisciplinary Approach Diagnosis

The implementation of higher education in the postgraduate programme is oriented towards producing professional academic human resources based on the Tri Dharma of Higher Education. Guaranteeing the quality of postgraduate student education is very important in the higher education system, meanwhile the quality of course teaching is the key to guaranteeing the quality of talent development, as well as being a necessity for current career formation The urgency of the need for this multidisciplinary approach guidance pattern is also in accordance with the contents of points b, c and d of the Malang State University Chancellor's Regulation Number 16 of 2016 concerning Malang State University Education Standards which reads as follows

a. Point b: Students can organise interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, or transdisciplinary research including theoretical studies and/or experiments.
b. Point c: Students can choose research that is appropriate, current, most advanced and provides benefit to humanity through an interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, or transdisciplinary approach.
c. Point d: Students can develop a research roadmap with an interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, or transdisciplinary approach.

These institutional standards highlight the recognition that postgraduate research cannot be confined to narrow disciplinary silos; instead, it must foster collaboration, innovation, and responsiveness to complex societal issues (Jacobs, 2014). The implication is clear: postgraduate programmes must design guidance patterns and supervisory practices that prepare students to navigate the demands of cross-disciplinary inquiry. This includes equipping them with the ability to synthesise theories, apply diverse methodologies, and communicate effectively across academic and professional communities. By institutionalising such approaches, higher education not only strengthens academic excellence but also enhances graduates' capacity to contribute meaningfully to solving real-world problems, from educational reform to technological innovation. Thus, the regulatory foundation and the urgency highlighted in recent scholarship both converge on the need for postgraduate education that is integrative, future-oriented, and globally relevant.

Referring to the discussion of research results, the multidisciplinary approach for students in completing their final assignment can be seen in the Figure 1.

Figure 1 illustrates the final project guidance pattern in a postgraduate programme with a multidisciplinary approach that emphasises collaboration between students, supervisors, and supervisors. The process begins with graduate students proposing research topics in accordance with issues stipulated in university regulations, encompassing the fields of science, technology, art, and community. These research proposals are then screened by the postgraduate faculty for acceptance or rejection. If accepted, master's students will be supervised by two supervisors, while doctoral students will be supervised by three supervisors. Subsequently, guidance is carried out through a mentoring contract with a four-component (4M) approach: man, material, method, and machine, each of which supports the development of a multidisciplinary scientific personality and the use of various research tools. This multidisciplinary guidance process consists of three main stages: an initial stage that emphasises the urgency of the research, research approaches, and scientific contributions; a middle stage that includes literature reviews, empirical studies, and research methods; and a final stage that emphasises the involvement of experts or field specialists, data analysis,

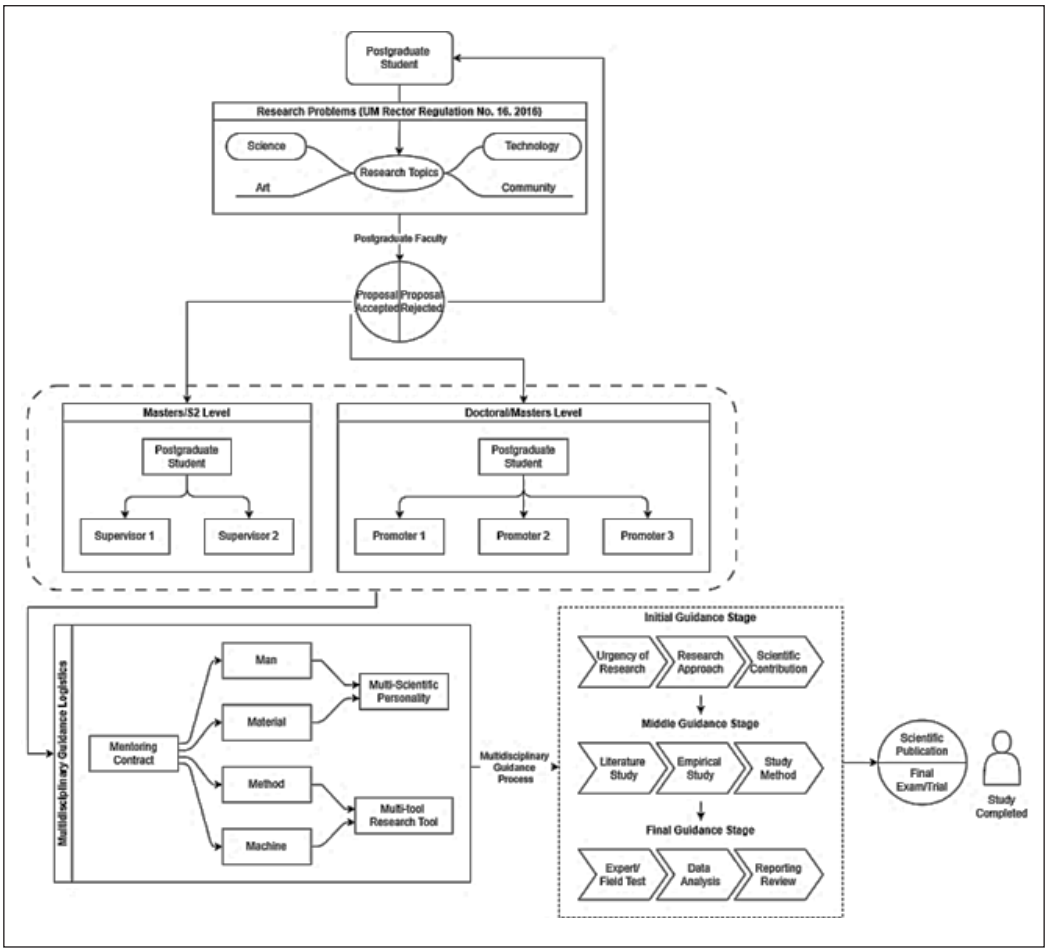

Figure 1. Postgraduate multidisciplinary approach final assignment guidance

and report review. All these stages culminate in scientific publications and a final exam, thus declaring students to have completed their studies with more holistic research competencies. Thus, this image shows the pattern of final project guidance in postgraduate studies as an integrative cycle that brings together the perspectives of students and lecturers in producing quality research that is relevant to academic demands and community needs.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the critical role of a multidisciplinary guidance pattern in postgraduate education to accelerate study completion and mitigate student burnout. By integrating the 4M framework (man, material, method, and machine), this approach fosters a collaborative and supportive academic environment for both students and supervisors. Implementing this structured and flexible mentoring cycle enables postgraduate programs to better

accommodate diverse student needs while maintaining high standards of academic research and timely graduation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors thank the State University of Malang (represented by LP2M UM) for the research and publication of funding in grant number 19.5.91/UN32.20.1/PM/2022.

REFERENCES

Acharya, M. S., Armaan, A., & Antony, A. S. (2019). A comparison of regression models for prediction of graduate admissions. In *2019 International Conference on Computational Intelligence in Data Science (ICCIDS)* (pp. 1-5). https://doi.org/10.1109/ICCIDS.2019.8862140

Aldowah, H., Al-Samarraie, H., & Fauzy, W. M. (2019). Educational data mining and learning analytics for 21st century higher education: A review and synthesis. *Telematics and Informatics, 37*, 13-49. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tele.2019.01.007

Andersen, C. L., & West, R. E. (2020). Improving mentoring in higher education in undergraduate education and exploring implications for online learning. *Revista de Educación a Distancia (RED), 20*(64). DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.6018/red.408671

Bagaka's, J. G., Badillo, N., Bransteter, I., & Rispinto, S. (2015). Exploring student success in a doctoral programme: The power of mentorship and research engagement. *International Journal of Doctoral Studies, 10*(1), 323-342. http://ijds.org/Volume10/IJDSv10p323-342Bagaka1713.pdf

Baranova, T., Tabolina, A., Bolsunovskaya, M., Yudina, I., Kozlovskii, P., & Fokina, V. (2020). Study of students' social perceptions about master's degree. In Z. Anikina (Ed.), *Integrating engineering education and humanities for global intercultural perspectives*. Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-47415-7_89

Bitzer, E. (2011). Doctoral success as ongoing quality education: A review of context, structure and supervision issues. *South African Journal of Higher Education, 25*(5), 819-838. https://hdl.handle.net/10520/EJC37699

Blakeslee, J., Miller, R., & Uretsky, M. (2022). Efficacy of the Project Futures self-determination coaching model for college students with foster care backgrounds and mental health challenges. *Children and Youth Services Review, 138*, Article 106507. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2022.106507

Bovill, C. (2020). Co-creation in learning and teaching: The case for a whole-class approach in higher education. *Higher Education, 79*(6), 1023-1037. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-019-00453-w

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3*(2), 77-101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Cabral, A. P., & Baptista, A. V. (2014). Enhancing experience and support provided to students within Bologna professionally focused master's degree. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences, 159*, 156-160. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.12.349

Carales, V. D. (2020a). Examining educational attainment outcomes: A focus on Latina/o community college students. *Community College Review, 48*(2), 195-219. https://doi.org/10.1177/00915521209030

Carter, S., & Kumar, V. (2017). Supervising international research students: The role of cultural context. *Higher Education Research & Development, 36*(4), 686-699.

Carter, S., & Laurs, D. (2018). *Developing research writing: A handbook for supervisors and advisors*. Routledge.

Chand, G. B. (2021). Challenges faced by bachelor level students while speaking English. *Indonesian Journal of English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics, 6*(1), 45-60. https://doi.org/10.21093/ijeltal.v6i1.853

Cole, M. S., Feild, H. S., & Harris, S. G. (2004). Student learning motivation and psychological hardiness: Interactive effects on students' reactions to a management class. *Academy of Management Learning & Education, 3*(1), 64-85.

Cordeiro, P., Paixão, P., & Rijo, D. (2022). Mind the gap! Cognitive-motivational determinants of career decision-making in postsecondary school transitions. *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, 1-12.

Gjestvang, B., Høye, S., & Bronken, B. A. (2021a). Aspiring for competence in a multifaceted everyday life: A qualitative study of adult students' experiences of a blended learning master programme in Norway. *International Journal of Nursing Sciences, 8*(1), 71-78. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijnss.2020.11.001

Guerin, C., Carter, S., & Aitchison, C. (2015). Blogging as academic practice: Identity, community, and engagement. *Higher Education Research & Development, 34*(2), 346-359.

Guo, P., Saab, N., Post, L. S., & Admiraal, W. (2020). A review of project-based learning in higher education: Student outcomes and measures. *International Journal of Educational Research, 102*, Article 101586.

He, M., Wen, Y., Qiu, Q., Sheng, G., Wei, Y., Wang, Z., & Hu, Y. (2023). The effects and gender-related differences of guided forest therapy programme on physiological and psychological health of graduating college students. *International Journal of Geoheritage and Parks*.

Hemer, S. R. (2012). Informality, power and relationships in postgraduate supervision: Supervising PhD candidates over coffee. *Higher Education Research & Development, 31*(6), 827-839.

Ifenthaler, D., & Yau, J. Y.-K. (2020). Utilising learning analytics to support study success in higher education: A systematic review. *Educational Technology Research and Development, 68*(4), 1961-1990. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11423-020-09788-z

Jacobi, M. (1991). Mentoring and undergraduate academic success: A literature review. *Review of Educational Research, 61*(4), 505-532. https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543061004505

Jacobs, J. A., & Frickel, S. (2009). Interdisciplinarity: A critical assessment. *Annual Review of Sociology, 35*, 43-65. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-070308-115954

Kumar, V., & Stracke, E. (2007). An analysis of written feedback on a PhD thesis. *Teaching in Higher Education, 12*(4), 461-470. https://doi.org/10.1080/13562510701415433

Lee, A. (2008). How are doctoral students supervised? Concepts of doctoral research supervision. *Studies in Higher Education, 33*(3), 267-281. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075070802049202

Lee, A. (2018). How are doctoral students supervised? Concepts of doctoral research supervision. *Studies in Higher Education, 43*(9), 1715-1728.

Lin, M., Liu, L. Y. J., & Pham, T. N. (2023). Towards developing a critical learning skills framework for master's students: Evidence from a UK university. *Thinking Skills and Creativity, 48*, Article 101267. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tsc.2023.101267

Lowe, H., & Cook, A. (2003). Mind the gap: Are students prepared for higher education? *Journal of Further and Higher Education, 27*(1), 53-76. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/03098770305629

Lupón, M., Armayones, M., & Cardona, G. (2023). Quality of life of caregivers of children with visual impairment: A qualitative approach. *Research in Developmental Disabilities, 138*, Article 104538. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ridd.2023.104538

Manathunga, C. (2007). Supervision as mentoring: The role of power and boundary crossing. *Studies in Continuing Education, 29*(2), 207-221. https://doi.org/10.1080/01580370701424650

Mishra, S. (2020). Social networks, social capital, social support and academic success in higher education: A systematic review with a special focus on 'underrepresented' students. *Educational Research Review, 29*, Article 100307. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2019.100307

Mochizuki, N. (2019). The lived experience of thesis writers in group writing conferences: The quest for "perfect" and "critical." *Journal of Second Language Writing, 43*, 36-45. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2018.02.001

Murillo-Zamorano, L. R., López Sánchez, J. Á., & Godoy-Caballero, A. L. (2019). How the flipped classroom affects knowledge, skills, and engagement in higher education: Effects on students' satisfaction. *Computers & Education, 141*, Article 103608. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2019.103608

Nozal, C. L., Pastor, J. F. D., Raedo, J. M., & Sánchez, R. M. (2013). An innovative Moodle final project management module for bachelor and master's studies. *IEEE Revista Iberoamericana de Tecnologías del Aprendizaje, 8*(3), 103–110. https://doi.org/10.1109/RITA.2013.2273109

Pyhältö, K., Toom, A., Stubb, J., & Lonka, K. (2012). Challenges of becoming a scholar: A study of doctoral students' problems and well-being. *ISRN Education, 2012*, Article 934941. https://doi.org/10.5402/2012/934941

Rodger, S., & Tremblay, P. F. (2003). The effects of a peer mentoring program on academic success among first year university students. *Canadian Journal of Higher Education, 33*(3), 1-17. https://doi.org/10.47678/cjhe.v33i3.183438

Roksa, J., & Kinsley, P. (2019). The role of family support in facilitating academic success of low-income students. *Research in Higher Education, 60*(4), 415-436. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11162-018-9517-z

Setiawan, R., Dewi, R. S. I., & Zainul, R. (2024). Development of growth mindset in higher education in support of the World-Class University. *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education, 13*(6), 3806-3817. https://doi.org/10.11591/ijere.v13i6.30145

Stapa, S. H., Maasum, T. N. R. T. M., & Aziz, M. S. A. (2014). Identifying problems in writing thesis introductions in research methodology class. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences, 112*, 497-502. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.01.1194

Sverdlik, A., Hall, N. C., McAlpine, L., & Hubbard, K. (2018). PhD experience: A review of the factors influencing doctoral students' completion, achievement, and well-being. *International Journal of Doctoral Studies, 13*, 361-388.

Tight, M. (2020). Student retention and engagement in higher education. *Journal of Further and Higher Education, 44*(5), 689-704. https://doi.org/10.1080/0309877X.2019.1576860

Viberg, O., Hatakka, M., Bälter, O., & Mavroudi, A. (2018). The current landscape of learning analytics in higher education. *Computers in Human Behavior, 89*, 98-110. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2018.07.027

Wisker, G. (2012). *The good supervisor: Supervising postgraduate and undergraduate research for doctoral theses and dissertations* (2nd ed.). Palgrave Macmillan.

Xu, L., & Zhang, L. J. (2019). L2 doctoral students' experiences in thesis writing in an English-

medium university in New Zealand. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 41*, Article 100779. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeap.2019.100779

Yale, A. T. (2019). The personal tutor–student relationship: Student expectations and experiences of personal tutoring in higher education. *Journal of Further and Higher Education, 43*(4), 533-544. https://doi.org/10.1080/0309877X.2017.1377164