

## ONLINE THESIS MENTORING IN UNIVERSITAS TERBUKA POSTGRADUATE PROGRAM

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### **Abstract**

Universitas Terbuka is a university that implements a distance learning system. The term distance means that learning is not carried out face-to-face, including mentoring students in writing a thesis. One of the modes of thesis mentoring is online. The purpose of this study is to analyze online mentoring that has been carried out by supervisors and students in the Universitas Terbuka postgraduate program. This study uses a survey method that has successfully recruited 117 students and 106 supervisors from all regions in Indonesia. The results of this study indicate that 1) the most effective media in the mentoring process are Video Conference Applications (Zoom Meeting, Google Meet, Microsoft Teams, etc.) and Chat Applications (WhatsApp, Telegram, Line, etc.); 2) the most effective media for sharing files are email and chat applications (WhatsApp, Telegram, Line, etc.); 3) The most effective file format for the mentoring process is Word; 4) the most effective media for providing notes for improvement is a Word file with Comment facilities on Word and Video Conference Applications (Zoom Meeting, Google Meet, Microsoft Teams, etc.); 5) and 38% of students and 30% of supervisors think that online mentoring has not optimal.

Keywords: distance learning system, mentoring media, mentoring apps, postgraduate students

### **1 INTRODUCTION**

Universitas Terbuka (UT) is a university that implements a distance learning system. This means that learning is not done face-to-face, but uses media, both print media (modules) and non-prints (audio/video, computer/internet, radio broadcasts, and television) (UT, 2021). The distance learning system is also applied in the UT Postgraduate. Student mentoring in thesis writing is carried out with a remote system. One of the modes of thesis mentoring is online.

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced all supervisors and students to choose an online mentoring mode. This is also the case throughout the college. Online learning opens up new solutions in the education world through the innovation of technology (Pratama et al, 2020). Various obstacles will arise due to changes in learning patterns from face-to-face to online (online) (Mahrus et al., 2021).

The online mentoring model that has been carried out so far is handed over to every supervisor and student. Mentoring is a power-free partnership between two individuals who desire to achieve mutual growth, where one of them usually has greater skills, experience, and wisdom (Weinstein, 1998). E-mentoring is conducted through computer-mediated communication tools such as emails and video conferences without time and location restrictions and by serving all people regardless of their gender, ethnicity, or disability (Bierema & Hill, 2005).

The mentoring models and applications used by mentors are diverse. So, it is necessary to analyze the online mentoring models carried out by supervisors and students. Based on these models, through further research, a mentoring model will be developed for students of Universitas Terbuka postgraduate program. Effective mentoring brings positive outcomes for mentees, mentors and their organizations. The research related to e-mentoring points to many of the problems, traits, and concepts associated with distance learning (Iqbal, 2020). Modern mentoring is developing through employment of technology and thus it is important to better understand these new opportunities and their limitations (Tisdell & Shekhawat, 2019).

## 2 METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to analyze online mentoring that has been carried out by supervisors and students in the Universitas Terbuka postgraduate program. This study uses a survey method that has successfully recruited 117 students and 106 supervisors from all regions in Indonesia. The survey method is used in this study because survey research is a study by collecting information from samples by asking through questionnaires or interview so that later it describes various aspects of the population (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1990). Questionnaires are distributed to all supervisors and students of the Universitas Terbuka postgraduate program with the following details,

*Table 1. Respondents' Regional Distribution*

Students		Supervisor	
Region	Sum	Region	Sum
Java and Bali	65	Java and Bali	74
Sumatra	30	Sumatra	12
Kalimantan	7	Kalimantan	3
Sulawesi and Maluku	4	Sulawesi and Maluku	7
NTT and NTB	4	NTB and NTT	6
Papua	7	Papua	4

Total	117	Total	106
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The questionnaire consists of several questions to identify several things so that the research objectives can be achieved, namely: 1) what media has been used for online mentoring; 2) what media is most effectively used in online mentoring; 3) what is the reason the media is effectively used in online mentoring; 4) what media is used to share files in online mentoring; 5) what media is most effectively used for file sharing in online mentoring; 6) what is the reason the media is effectively used for file sharing in online mentoring; 7) what form of file is commonly used for online mentoring; what form of file is most effectively used in online mentoring; 8) the reason the form of the file is most effective in online mentoring; 9) how the supervisor notes the online mentoring; 10) what kind of mentor is effective in giving notes; 11) Opinions on optimization in online mentoring so far.

### 3 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1 Thesis Mentoring Media

The following are the opinions of thesis supervisors and students about the most effective thesis mentoring media in the Figure 1. below,

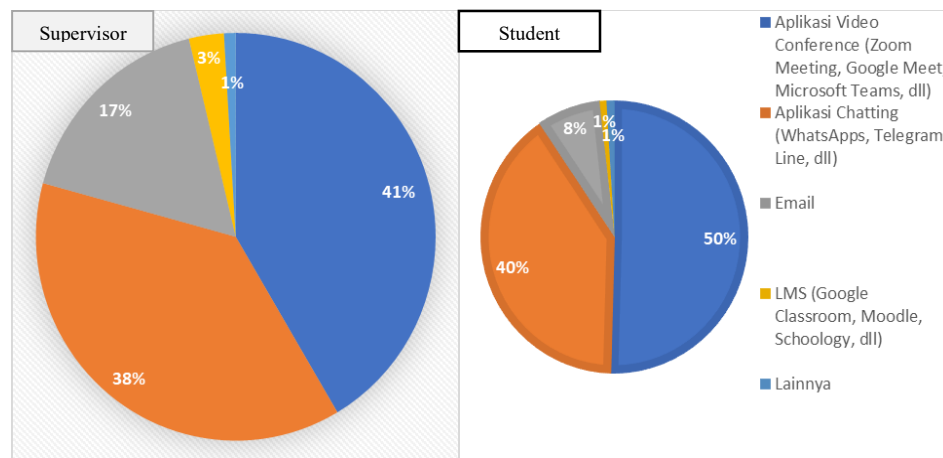


Figure 1. Online Mentoring Media

41% of mentors think that the most effective medium for mentoring is the Chat App. Likewise, 50% of students think the same that the most effective medium for mentoring is the Chat Application. Meanwhile, 38% of supervisors and 40% of students think that Video Conference Applications are the most effective. Meanwhile, 17% of mentors and 7% of students revealed the most effective was email. LMS and others are considered effective by only 4% of mentors and 2% of students. Here are the reasons why the majority of students and supervisors consider that Chat and Video Conference Applications are most effective in online mentoring,

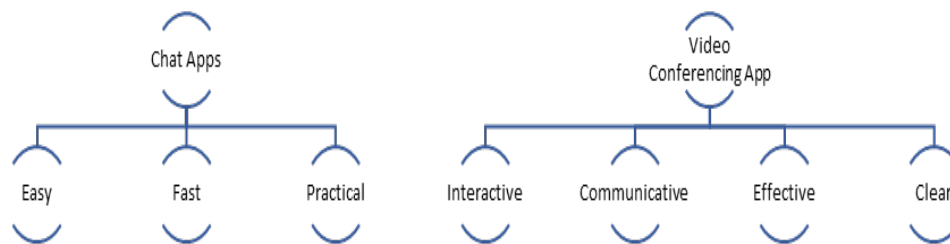


Figure 2. Reasons for Choosing an Apps

This is in line with the results of the RWSA Secretariat (Iqbal, 2020) that effective media for oral communication, brainstorming, and problem solving are Video Conferencing and Chat apps.

### 3.2 Thesis File Sharing Media

The most effective medium for sharing thesis files in the opinion of supervisors and students is shown in the following Figure 3.

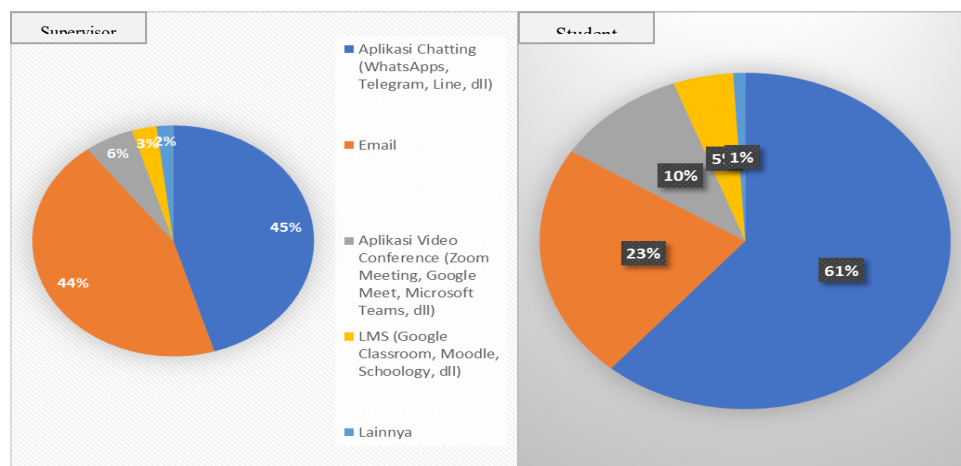


Figure 3. File Sharing Media

According to 45% of mentors and 61% of college students, the most effective medium for sharing thesis files is the Chat Application. Then 44% of mentors and 23% of college students think that email is the most effective file-sharing medium. Furthermore, 6% of supervisors and 10% of students consider that Video Conference Applications are the most effective for sharing TAPM files. As for the rest, only 5% of mentors and 6% of students think that LMS and others are the most effective. The reasons according to supervisors and students that the most effective chat and email applications for sharing files are as follows,

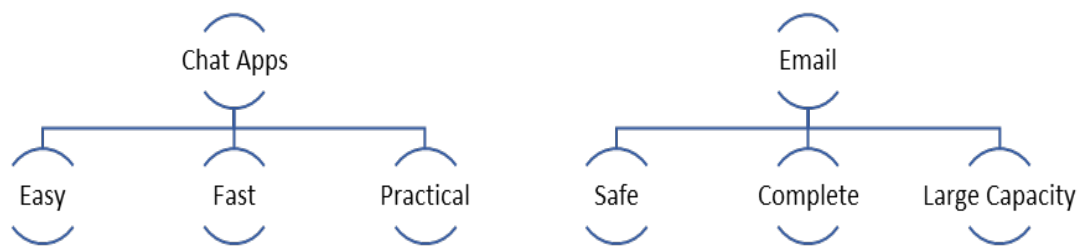


Figure 4. Reasons for Choosing an App

Regarding writing, the most effective media used for mentoring is email, online file storage applications (Google Drive, Dropbox, One Drive) (Iqbal, 2020)

### 3.3 Thesis File Form

Figure 5. below shows that the form of the file considered effective is as follows,

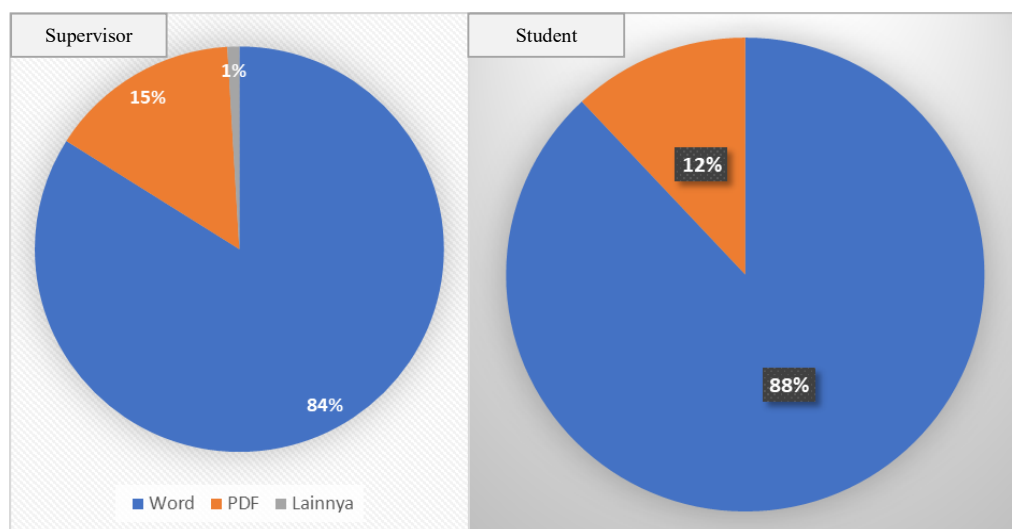


Figure 5. File Shape

As many as 88% of students and 84% of supervisors think that word is the most effective. Students argue that Word files are easy to correct, given input and suggestions, and easy to review by supervisors. While the rest, namely 12% of students and 15% of supervisors consider PDF to be the most effective form of a file.

### 3.4 Media to Provide Notes for Thesis Correction

The following Figure 6. shows the opinions of supervisors and students regarding the media to provide notes for the most effective improvement of thesis.

Based on the picture above, it appears that 65% of supervisors and 64% of students think that the Comment facility on Word is the most effective. Meanwhile, 11% of supervisors and 14% of students think that writing down directly the points that must be improved on the most effective Chat Application. 10% of mentors and 9% of students revealed that improvements delivered directly through the Video Conference Application are the most effective. While 5% of mentors and 7% of students, highlights in Word files are the most effective. Furthermore, 3% of supervisors and 4% of students said that directly writing down the points that should be corrected is the most effective email. As for the rest through the Comment facility in PDF and LMS.

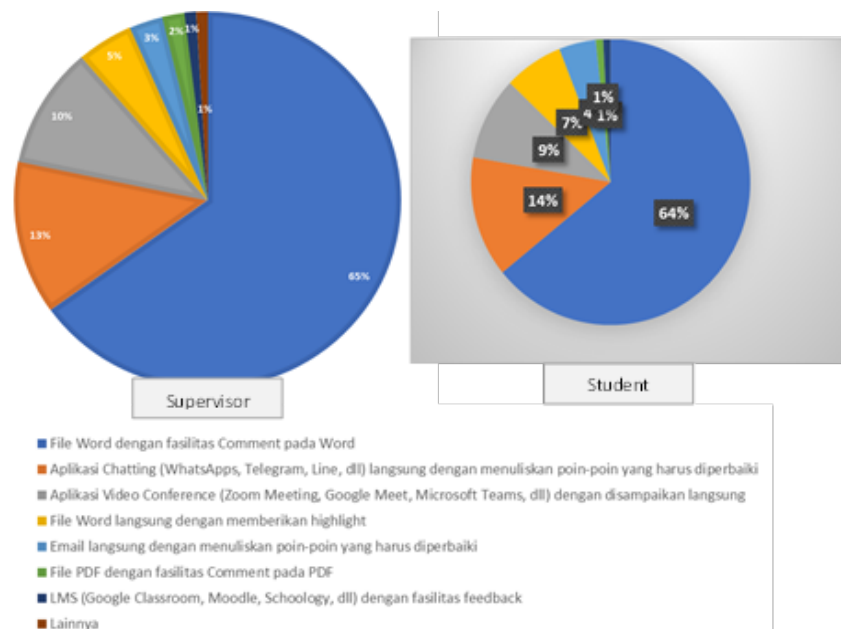


Figure 6. Media for Providing Mentoring Notes

The supervisors agree that the Comment facility in Word is more practical to write down the points that need to be corrected by students directly in the part of the manuscript or corrected writing. Comment facility in Word can provide more detailed notes on each word, sentence, paragraph,

image, and table. so that students can easily understand parts that are not appropriate or inappropriate and need to be revised. Likewise, according to students, through the Comment facility in Word, students can immediately understand the errors that must be corrected through the comments of the supervisor and indirectly have highlighted the notes that must be revised on the thesis. Students can find out in detail the parts that get notes from the supervisor.

### 3.5 Optimal Mentoring

Supervisors and students are asked whether the guidance process that has been carried out is optimal. The result in the following Figure 7. According to 60% of supervisors and 49% of students, it is optimal, but 28% of supervisors and 32% of students think that the mentoring process is still not optimal. Meanwhile, 10% of supervisors and 14% of students stated that it was very optimal, while 2% of supervisors and 5% considered it not optimal.

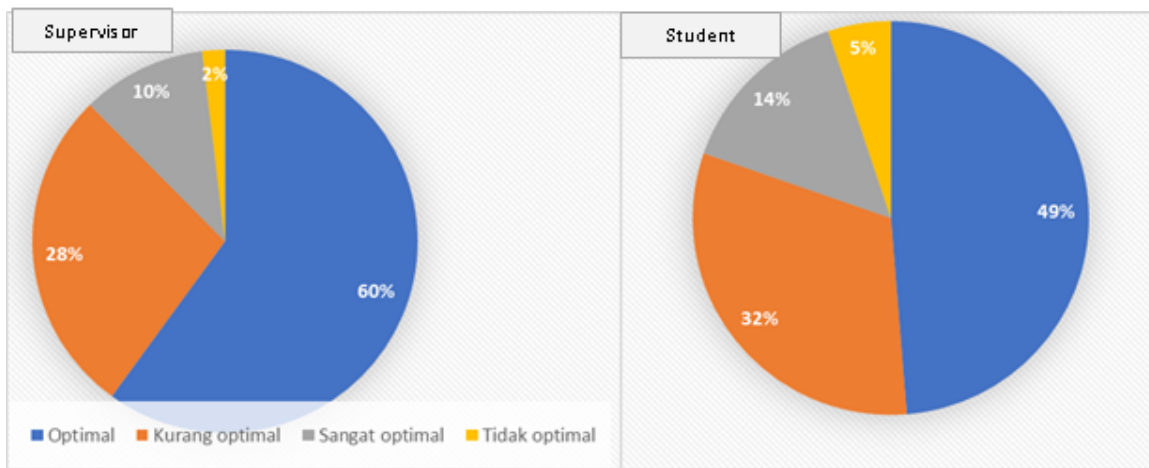


Figure 7. Opinions of Supervisors and Students about Online Mentoring

Online guidance is still not effective according to the supervisor because sometimes there is a lot of misinformation, which is caused by signal constraints so some cannot listen optimally. If it is only done through WA or email, it is also not necessarily able to be captured properly and is prone to misperceptions. Likewise, according to students, technology cannot read the expressions or character of the supervisor, so students often misconceptualize the revision of the supervisor.

The results of this study are in line with research that reveals that e-mentoring requires regular connection via phone, Skype / WhatsApp / Viber / Messenger, and maintaining communication via email and messages (Ladyshewsky & Pettapiece, 2015). In this form, mentors and students can be encouraged to meet online, at the request of mahasiswa, for guidance through the

development of concepts and ideas. Students are responsible for organizing online meetings, making their expectations clear, and documenting the results (Schlager & Fusco, 2003).

#### **4 CONCLUSION**

The results of this study indicate that 1) the most effective media in the mentoring process are Video Conference Applications (Zoom Meeting, Google Meet, Microsoft Teams, etc.) and Chat Applications (WhatsApp, Telegram, Line, etc.); 2) the most effective media for sharing files are email and chat applications (WhatsApp, Telegram, Line, etc.); 3) The most effective file format for the mentoring process is Word; 4) the most effective media for providing notes for improvement is a Word file with Comment facilities on Word and Video Conference Applications (Zoom Meeting, Google Meet, Microsoft Teams, etc.; 5) and 38% of students and 30% of supervisors think that online mentoring has not optimal.

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