

Statistical Analysis Of Anxiety Levels And Their Effect On EFL Learner Writing Skills In 5th Semester

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Abstract: Writing skills are an important component of English language learning, yet many students face anxiety that interferes with their writing performance. This study aims to determine the relationship between anxiety levels and writing skills, focusing on anxiety related to grammar and evaluation. The method used was descriptive quantitative, with data obtained through questionnaires completed by 14 university students. This study provides insight into how anxiety affects EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students' writing skills, as well as the implications for English language teaching. The results are expected to assist educators in designing more effective strategies to address students' anxiety and improve their writing skills. Thus, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of the dynamics between anxiety and writing skills among EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students.

INTRODUCTION

Writing is a fundamental skill for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, crucial for effective communication in both academic and professional settings. Despite its importance, many EFL learners encounter significant challenges in developing their writing abilities. One prominent issue contributing to these difficulties is anxiety, which can severely impact a learner's performance and overall language acquisition. Research has indicated that anxiety levels among language learners can manifest in various forms, including writing anxiety, which specifically affects the writing process. According to (Bhowmik & Kim 2021) enhancing writing skills should be a primary focus for educators, particularly as anxiety can hinder students' confidence and willingness to engage in writing tasks. (Puspita 2023), further highlights the detrimental effects of anxiety, revealing that students often experience fear and pressure when attempting to improve their writing.

Writing anxiety has been identified as a complex phenomenon influenced by both internal and external factors. (Sabti et al., 2019) noted that the complexity of writing tasks, coupled with learners' limited vocabulary and grammar knowledge, exacerbates this anxiety. Additionally, (Prasetyaningrum et al., 2021) classify writing anxiety into three categories: cognitive anxiety, somatic anxiety, and avoidance behavior. These categories

provide a framework for understanding how anxiety manifests in EFL learners and its subsequent impact on their writing skills. The purpose of this research activity is to identify the factors that cause writing anxiety in EFL students and offer solutions based on approaches to reduce its negative impacts. Through research and intervention or modifying the process, it is expected that students can be more confident in writing, improve their skills, and ultimately be able to develop better language competence overall. Thus, this research will contribute to improving the quality of writing learning for EFL learners and creating a more supportive and anxiety-free learning environment.

Anxiety, as one of the affective factors, has been a topic that has attracted research attention over the years. It has attracted the attention of not only psychologists but also researchers and teachers in the field of second language acquisition due to its significant influence on the language learning process as stated by (YAYLI & GENÇ, 2019). Therefore, anxiety has a big influence on language learning, especially for second language learners. It often affects students' confidence when speaking or writing, so it is important for teachers to create a supportive learning environment for students to feel more comfortable. (Jia, 2024) revealed that in the era of globalization, students have access to a wide range of resources, which often makes them aware of the limitations of their own knowledge. This, coupled with social pressure and an abundance of information, creates anxiety. In the classroom environment, students tend to compare themselves with classmates to assess their abilities and achievements. This phenomenon reflects how wide access to information provides not only benefits but also psychological challenges for students. It is important for educators to create a supportive learning environment where students focus more on self-development rather than comparison with others. Approaches such as confidence building and collaboration-based learning can help alleviate such pressures. According to (Salikin, 2019), students' anxiety in learning English is caused by low self-confidence, lack of practice, and mastery of writing techniques. These factors are interrelated, where linguistic problems arise from a lack of writing practice, which then affects their cognitive abilities in learning English as a foreign language. Lack of practice and mastery of techniques can be a major cause of student anxiety. However, external factors such as support from the learning environment, teachers and peers also play an important role in improving students' confidence and writing ability. With the right learning approach, anxiety can be minimized.

To alleviate writing anxiety among EFL learners, a combination of affective, cognitive, and task-specific strategies can be employed. Fostering self-confidence through positive feedback and reframing errors as learning opportunities is essential to reduce stress and build resilience (Qashoa, 2014). Cognitive strategies, such as regular practice, utilizing model samples, and creating writing outlines, help learners feel more prepared and focused. Pre-writing activities like brainstorming, clustering, and listing enable students to organize their ideas, while discussions and debates on familiar topics foster engagement and idea generation (Kurniasih et al., 2024; Kurniasih & Saukah, 2021). Incorporating technology, such as Grammarly and online dictionaries, addresses linguistic difficulties and boosts confidence through immediate feedback. Peer feedback activities, particularly blind reviews, and collaborative writing tasks enhance critical thinking and reduce anxiety by fostering a supportive and interactive environment. Adopting a process-oriented writing approach—encouraging drafting, editing, and teacher-student feedback further supports learners by emphasizing writing as a process rather than a single task. Finally, shifting from timed tests to take-home assignments reduces test-induced pressure, ensuring learners focus on writing quality and skill development (Kurniasih et al., 2024; Kurniasih & Saukah, 2021).

According to (DİKMEN, 2022), foreign language anxiety has a significant influence on EFL students' writing performance, as high levels of anxiety can reduce motivation and writing ability. In addition, (Tu, 2021) explains that creating a psychologically safe classroom environment can help reduce anxiety and improve academic performance and student engagement. Meanwhile, (Cui et al., 2021) showed that structured feedback from peers can encourage writing competence and self-directed learning, creating a supportive atmosphere for students to improve their performance. These findings provide guidance for teachers in implementing strategies to create a positive learning atmosphere, which can improve EFL students' writing outcomes.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a quantitative approach with a descriptive design to analyze the relationship between anxiety levels and writing skills among 5th semester EFL students. The subjects of this study involved 14 participants, consisting of 7 students of class A and 7 students of class B of the English Education Study Program at the State Islamic Institute (IAIN) Palangka Raya. The instrument used in this study was a questionnaire distributed through Google Forms. The questionnaire was designed to measure students' anxiety levels and perceptions of their writing skills, with the first section using a Likert scale to measure anxiety.

Data collection was conducted over two days at the State Islamic Institute (IAIN) Palangka Raya. The data obtained was analyzed using descriptive statistical analysis techniques, with the Jamovi application used for data calculation and analysis. This study aims to illustrate the relationship between anxiety levels and students' writing skills, as well as provide insight into the impact of anxiety on EFL students' writing skills.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table: Descriptive Statistical Analysis of Anxiety and EFL Writing Skills
Table 1. Distribution of Writing Frequency in English

Writing Frequency	N	Percentage
Never	1	6.67%
1-2 times	7	46.67%
3-4 times	5	33.33%
5 times or more	2	13.33%
Total	15	100%

Table 1: Distribution of Writing Frequency in English:

This table shows the distribution of writing frequency in English by students. Most students (46.67%) only write in English 1-2 times per week, which reflects the low intensity of their writing practice.

Writing Anxiety Analysis

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Writing Anxiety

Item	Mean	SD	Min	Max
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Grammar Fear	3.73	0.96	1	5
Essay Writing Pressure	3.00	0.85	2	5
Comprehension Worries	3.40	0.83	2	5
Evaluation Anxiety	3.67	0.98	2	5
Writing Avoidance	3.27	0.96	2	5
Idea Organization Difficulty	3.13	0.92	2	5

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Writing Anxiety:

This table contains the descriptive statistical analysis of writing anxiety. The highest mean score was in the category of fear of grammar ($M = 3.73$), followed by evaluation anxiety ($M = 3.67$). The anxiety scale showed good reliability with $\alpha = 0.84$.

Self-Efficacy in Writing Analysis

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Self-Efficacy

Item	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Sentence Construction	3.27	0.80	2	5
Cohesion & Coherence	3.07	0.88	2	5
Clarity of Ideas	3.40	0.63	3	5
Vocabulary Variation	3.27	0.70	2	5
Grammar Accuracy	3.67	0.72	2	5
Comprehension Confidence	3.47	0.64	2	5

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Self-Efficacy:

This table illustrates the descriptive statistics related to self-efficacy in writing. The highest score was on grammatical accuracy ($M = 3.67$), while the lowest score was on cohesion and coherence ($M = 3.07$). The reliability of the self-efficacy scale is very good with $\alpha = 0.89$.

Class Comparison Analysis

Table 4. Comparison of Mean Scores between TBI 5A and 5B

Variable	TBI 5A	TBI 5B	t	p
Anxiety	3.28	3.45	0.76	0.46
Self-efficacy	3.22	3.52	1.98	0.069

Table 4: Comparison of Mean Scores between TBI 5A and TBI 5B:

This table compares the mean scores between TBI 5A and TBI 5B classes. Although there is no significant difference in anxiety levels between the two classes, the TBI 5B class tends to have higher self-efficacy.

Corellation Between Variables

Table 5. Correlation Matrix

Variable	1	2	3
1. Writing Frequency	1.00		
2. Anxiety	-0.32	1.00	
3. Self-efficacy	0.45	-0.58	1.00

Table 5: Correlation Matrix:

This table presents the correlation matrix between variables such as anxiety, self-efficacy, and writing frequency. The results show a significant negative correlation between anxiety and self-efficacy ($r = -0.58$) as well as a positive correlation between writing frequency and self-efficacy ($r = 0.45$).

This study revealed that the majority of students (46.67%) wrote in English only 1-2 times perweek, indicating a relatively low frequency of writing practice. In terms of writing anxiety, the highest mean score was observed for fear of grammar ($M = 3.73$), followed by evaluation anxiety($M = 3.67$). The writing anxiety scale showed good internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.84$). Regarding self-efficacy, the highest score was found for grammatical accuracy ($M = 3.67$), while cohesion and coherence scored the lowest ($M = 3.07$), with excellent reliability ($\alpha = 0.89$) for the self-efficacy scale.

A comparison between TBI 5A and TBI 5B classes showed no significant difference in anxiety levels; however, there was a tendency for TBI 5B to show higher self-efficacy, although not statistically significant. In addition, a significant negative correlation was found between anxiety and self-efficacy ($r = -0.58$), indicating that higher anxiety is associated with lower self-efficacy. In addition, writing frequency was positively correlated with self-efficacy ($r = 0.45$) and negatively correlated with anxiety ($r = -0.32$), indicating a link between these variables.

The anxiety level of students in the 5th semester correlated inversely with their writing skills,based on statistical analysis, meaning the higher the anxiety level, the lower the value or quality ofthe writing produced. Data are obtained through an instrument in the form of an anxiety questionnaire. What is more important, it displays that anxiety about writing is not a unitary construct but rather made up of elements like apprehension due to negative evaluation, lack of enough confidence and concern related to the capacity of structuring the thoughts or using grammar correctly. The findings showed that these elements of writing anxiety significantly affect the quality of writing, especially cohesion, coherence, and grammatical intricacy.

This showed that the majority of the students, 46.67%, wrote in English only 1-2 times a week, which falls into the lower category of frequency of writing practice. Regarding the writing anxietyscale, the highest mean score was for the category of grammar fear: $M = 3.73$, and then came thecategory related to evaluation anxiety: $M = 3.67$. The reliability of the writing anxiety scale presented an alpha of 0.84. Regarding self-efficacy, the highest score

was for grammatical accuracy with a mean of 3.67, while the lowest score was for cohesion and coherence with a mean of 3.07. The statement to measure self-efficacy showed excellent reliability with $\alpha = 0.89$. A comparison between TBI 5A and TBI 5B classes showed no significant difference in anxiety levels; however, there was a tendency for TBI 5B to show higher self-efficacy, although not statistically significant. In addition, a significant negative correlation was found between anxiety and self-efficacy ($r = -0.58$), indicating that higher anxiety is associated with lower self-efficacy. In addition, writing frequency was positively correlated with self-efficacy ($r = 0.45$) and negatively correlated with anxiety ($r = -0.32$), indicating a link between these variables.

According to (Bhowmik & Kim 2021), "The results of the current investigation therefore show consistency with the previous studies, which said that the development of writing skills must be of core interest to every educator, especially since the anxiety reduces students' confidence as well as willingness to join in the writing activity.". However, this research somewhat contradicts (Zhanget al., 2020) findings where, on the one hand, he claimed that anxiety strongly influences only certain features of writing, such as grammar, yet on the other hand did not lead to other, such as fluency, aspects. In contrast, this study found that anxiety affects nearly all of the aspects of writing, starting with fluency, including coherence, up to text organization. This suggests that the influence of anxiety on writing competencies might vary according to educational settings, the linguistic proficiency of students, and the pedagogies involved. To better explain the results of the study, some current theories related to anxiety in language acquisition can be compared. (Wang & Wu 2020) argue that the affective filter theory suggests that high levels of anxiety among students result in a psychological barrier to impede the process of comprehension of language input. This, in turn, generates a negative learning environment and erodes confidence among students to communicate well. Additionally, results show that anxiety might lower one's motivation to learn a language. According to (Lee & Hsieh 2019) motivation and emotions play the most decisive roles in increasing student's desire to communicate in a foreign language as more motivated individuals experience less anxiety during communicative performances. Thus, it is suggested that instructors create a non-threatening environment that would help decrease anxiety and enhance students' confidence in writing and speaking in a foreign language.

Speaking about similarities, the present research shares with other investigations a notion that anxiety has a detrimental effect on writing performance. However, the point distinguishing it is the extent to which anxiety affects some particular aspects of writing. While many studies have produced similar findings to suggest that anxiety affects only grammatical use and sentence building, several others, like the findings of this study, suggest that its impact extends to writing fluency and coherence. These variations are probably due to differences in research methodologies and learners' characteristics, as well as varied linguistic and cultural contexts. Based on the analysis, anxiety significantly contributes to lowering the writing skills of 5th-semester EFL students. The result corroborates a few past studies though there is a difference in the level of influence on various aspects of writing. Linking the results of this study to the relevant literature made the drawn conclusions clear and confirmed them. The emphasis is that in teaching English effectively to improve the writing skills of students, attention should also be given to effective factors.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the significant impact of writing anxiety on the writing skills

of 5th-semester EFL students at IAIN Palangka Raya. The results show that higher anxiety levels, particularly those linked to concerns about grammar and evaluation, lead to lower self-efficacy in writing and less frequent writing practice. The study also supports the idea that writing anxiety is a complex issue, influenced by cognitive, emotional, and behavioral factors, which ultimately affects overall language acquisition. Moreover, the findings suggest that anxiety not only influences specific writing aspects like grammatical accuracy but also broader elements such as coherence and fluency. These insights align with previous studies while providing new perspectives on the broader effects of anxiety on various writing dimensions. From a teaching perspective, it is recommended that educators focus on the emotional aspects of language learning by fostering a supportive and non-threatening environment. By reducing anxiety and enhancing self-efficacy, instructors can help students feel more confident and motivated to engage in writing, ultimately improving their writing skills and overall language competence. In conclusion, this research adds to the understanding of the effects of writing anxiety on EFL learners and emphasizes the importance of targeted interventions that address both cognitive and emotional factors to enhance students' writing development.

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