Types And Levels Of Writing Anxiety Among Indonesian Secondary School And University Students

Anggi Rizky Liestyana[1], Herri Mulyono[2], Silih Warni[3], Gunawan Suryoputro[4]
{aanggirizky@gmail.com[1], hmulyono@uhamka.ac.id[2], silihwarni@uhamka.ac.id[3], gunawan_suryoputro@uhamka.ac.id[4]}

University of Muhammadiyah Prof. Dr. Hamka, Jakarta, Indonesia

Abstract. This preliminary study attempts to examine the types and levels of writing anxiety experienced by Indonesian students studying at secondary schools and universities. Using a survey method, 219 Indonesian EFL students from secondary schools and universities were asked to complete a Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI). Statistical analysis was performed using SPSS and found that many students across education levels experienced second language writing anxiety at moderate level. Results of SPSS calculation showed that there were significant differences between male and female students towards the types of anxiety. According to the table, it is clearly asserted that cognitive anxiety is significantly influenced by gender (t= 2.661, Sig.=0.008), nor avoidance behavior (t= -0.345, Sig.= 0.730) and somatic anxiety (t= 1.251, Sig.= 0.212). Moreover, male students (M= 3.30) are more likely to be anxious at the type of cognitive anxiety than female students (M= 2.99).

Keywords: writing anxiety, SLWAI, EFL students, level of anxiety, type of anxiety

1 Introduction

Learning a foreign language often provokes students to raise their awareness of feeling anxious. The feeling of anxiety enables to affect the level of one's abilities. It is emerging when students sustain fear and loss of self-confidence. In the case of foreign language learning, anxiety refers to fear and worry about learning a new language (Ekmekçi, 2018). Also, it becomes one of factor contribute to affect students learning process (Kara, 2013). The effects of anxiety in learning English as a foreign language (EFL) become a frightening specter for students' further academic competence, such as writing. This issue trigger students to the low awareness of writing attitude that has been recognized as a barrier in the context of foreign language learning. Due to the reality of writing is provoking anxiety, ideas are written require strong critical thinking skills as an extension. Both students and teachers must be done by paying attention to the learning outcomes.

In terms of academic competence, writing requires a higher mental process of extending content and organizing appropriate structures and grammar. Following the issue encountered in writing, some experts suggest a fundamental view of writing anxiety (Ho, 2016; Özkan &

Da, 2015; Rezaei & Jafari, 2014). As preliminary, writing anxiety perceives as a general avoidance situation towards writing that is handled by individuals as they limit themselves to improvise in writing (Rezaei & Jafari, 2014). Özkan & Da (2015) views writing anxiety as an own discouragement as the result of the development of a negative attitude towards writing. Students with low motivation, achieve a lower result of writing which is not following what is expected. Thus, writing anxiety is demotivation of individuals' inherent tendency dealing with the tasks that require components and strategies in writing (Ho, 2016).

Theoretically, most of the EFL students face several issues of writing. These constraints are a significant factor in the emergence of writing anxiety for EFL students. The factors influencing writing anxiety among EFL students are poor linguistic knowledge, time pressure, lack of negative motivation, and fear of negative feedback (Rezaei & Jafari, 2014). This view also supported by (Ho, 2016; Özkan & Da, 2015) who argue that those factors can harm students with high anxiety as they cannot reflect ideas and organize writing self-efficacy. Students with high levels of writing anxiety are only able to write in short with low-quality content and writing composition. In this case, teachers play the primary role in giving the reflection to reduce students' anxiety in writing.

These issues trigger students' anxiety in writing since they increase nervousness, tension, and feelings of insecurity (Özkan & Da, 2015). It is consentaneous with Shang (2013), who argues that writing anxiety, associated with psychological development, has a negative impact which significantly affects the EFL students' performance in writing. Writing experience, writing self-efficacy, and writing competence of EFL students in Indonesia is still far from the average. So, the substantial and significant endeavor is needed to improve a better understanding of writing anxiety. For instance, Kurniasih (2017) revealed that EFL university students in Indonesia feel insecure in writing. Whereas, with the level of higher education, they should have no worries about writing problems psychologically.

This present study provides the levels of Indonesia EFL secondary school and university students' writing anxiety. Both teachers and students can be potentially affected by this study towards the implementation of teaching and learning writing strategies in the classroom. The results of this study can be useful as a reference to reduce the issues of anxiety in writing English as a foreign language. Moreover, it can also increase the awareness of teachers, material developers, and syllabus designers to determine the material which is in accordance with its application to students. To investigate the types and levels of EFL students' writing anxiety, this present study tries to address the following research question:

1. What types and levels of writing anxiety do Indonesian EFL secondary school and university students experience?

2 Literature Review

2.1 Understanding of Writing Anxiety

Rezaei & Jafari (2014), perceive writing anxiety as a general avoidance situation towards writing that is felt by individuals as they limit themselves to precisely improvise in writing. Academic writing requires a higher mental process in terms of extending content and organizing appropriate structures and grammar. Students avoid writing tasks as they have little opportunity to explore their limited understanding of writing.

Moreover, Özkan & Da (2015) who argues that writing anxiety is an individual discouragement as the result of the development of negative attitudes towards writing. Students with low motivation, get the results of writing which are not in accordance with academic expectations. On the contrary, it is such a great achievement to complete writing compositions without feeling anxious. Psychologically, it is normal when students feel anxious to write. Also, students tend to be more anxious when they realize that their writing is going to be evaluated (Kurniasih, 2017).

Furthermore, writing anxiety is demotivation based on an individual's inherent tendency in dealing with the tasks that require components and strategies in writing (Ho, 2016). Writing anxiety can affect students in choosing writing tasks in English as they feel anxious about the content which will be provided (Ekmekçi, 2018). Too many writing tasks make students feel depressed, especially with the time constraint. Thus, students certainly cannot produce good writing based on appropriate content and components.

From the definition above, writing anxiety can be seen as high mental processes due to fear of choosing writing content accompanied by vocabulary mastery and appropriate sentence structure. Most students feel insecure when given the task of writing with unfamiliar and challenging content. The relationship between language anxiety and writing performance is not simple but subtle.

2.2 Writing Anxiety in EFL Classroom

Conducting writing learning for EFL students is commonly tricky if they feel anxious to write. Classroom circumstances and teachers' strategy affect students' motivation to write a composition in English. This is also imperative in teaching student writing skills as the teacher ensures students' cognitive, behavioral, and motivational involvement (Özkan & Da, 2015). Students with high levels of anxiety tend not to write to reflect their ideas, but solely to get good grades and pass the exam (Rezaei & Jafari, 2014). When students write, they fear the teachers' negative comment in the classroom. However, that is the fact that the adverse classroom circumstances can provoke students to feel more anxious. Also, students who are not continually being criticized feel more comfortable and appreciated (Ekmekçi, 2018).From the definition, writing anxiety and writing anxiety in EFL classroom can interfere with the unity of students' belief in writing. Both students and teachers play an essential role in the development of language learning, especially in writing. Those definition is dealing with how to reduce the effect of writing anxiety.

Numerous studies (Cheng, 2004; Ekmekçi, 2018; Ho, 2016; Özkan & Da, 2015; Rezaei & Jafari, 2014) have been done on administering the causes of EFL students writing anxiety. The causes which have been investigated were working under a time constraint, fear of negative evaluation, and linguistic difficulties. First, students tend not to be able to explore their thoughts in writing under time constraints. Work under a time constraint can affect the result of writing competence, which can be expanded to grammatical mistakes, inappropriate vocabulary use, and short compositions. The second is that students are worried about being evaluated by teachers. Worried about being assessed by teachers and peers are categorized as cognitive anxiety. This factor relates to both teachers and peer review, which can affect students' motivation. As proven by Ekmekçi (2018), students are worried and anxious for being evaluated and getting a poor score on their writing tasks in the classroom. Despite this issue, some students are not concerned with the negative feedback is given by the teacher and regard it as an opportunity to learn and improve their ability to write (Ho, 2016). The last is linguistic difficulties. This factor sets into avoidance behavior as students tend to avoid

writing task because of lack of linguistic knowledge. Writing without having an excellent competence of linguistic knowledge may affect the writing quality.

2 Method

2.1 Research Design

This preliminary study employs a non-experimental quantitative research design in order to investigate the types and levels of writing anxiety among Indonesia EFL students. Quantitative research design is a research methodology based on numerical data collection, which is then calculated statistically (Bell & Waters, 2014). Furthermore, to obtain proven data, this study applied a survey method that aims to obtain large amounts of data samples. Survey method aims to gain information in the form of data from samples as a whole populations' representative (Bell & Waters, 2014). This study employed a survey in the form of an online close-ended questionnaire, which is presented through a Google form.

2.2. Setting and Participants

This preliminary study involves 219 EFL students from a different background of the study and affiliation. They are both from secondary school and university students who studied English as a foreign language (EFL). In specific, there are 62 middle school students, 64 high school students, and 93 university students. As well, the students spread from various provinces in Indonesia. Six provinces of Indonesia engage in this study, such as Banten, DKI Jakarta, East Java, West Java, Riau, and South Sumatera. The reason for data selection was initially based on the researcher experience. Although they have studied languages for years, they are still having difficulty developing their writing potential. Students in secondary school and university tended to avoid writing task as they cannot write better in English.

2.3 Data Collection Method(s) and Analysis

To investigate the types and levels of EFL students' writing anxiety, a close-ended questionnaire will be employed. The questionnaire of this current study will be adapted from (Cheng, 2004) which called as Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI). The questionnaire is then translated to Indonesian to ease the students on understanding the purpose of each statement. There are 22 items consisted which is delivered online to the students. Then, the raw data measured from the instrument are tabulated, calculated, and analyzed using Ms. Excel and SPSS software program.

3 Findings And Discussions

Score reliability is assessed to investigate the consistency interaction between person and item. Reliability score for the 22 items of SLWAI measured by Cronbach's alpha is 0.93. Regarding the measurement using SPSS software, the SWAI questionnaire is acceptable and satisfactory reliability.

The findings of the levels of EFL students' writing anxiety was presented in this part. Besides the overall findings, this study shows specific results in addressing students' level of anxiety based on educational level. Likewise, the current study also mentions the type of anxiety that is most experienced by EFL students based on gender. To ensure the different responses of EFL student's writing anxiety among gender, an independent samle T-test is employed.

Table 1 displays information of students at a certain level of EFL writing anxiety. The current study offers three different main classifications to distinguish the student's level of writing anxiety (e.g., high anxiety, moderate anxiety, and low anxiety). As can be seen in Table 1, there are 24 students hold the ability to write at a high level of anxiety (M = 92.88, SD = 6.92). Whereas for the moderate level of writing anxiety, 130 students tend to struggle at that level (M = 71.86, SD = 6.76). Then, the last level informed is low anxiety which obtains 65 students (M = 52.49, SD = 6.46). Refers to the range score of overall writing anxiety level, the overall mean score of 72.41 indicates that students are actually at the moderate level of writing anxiety.

Similar results were found by Ekmekçi (2018) in his study of writing anxiety among EFL prospective teachers. This result was certainly really pathetic for teachers and students, as they were dominantly at a quite safe level. However, it would be better if the teacher gave more attention in order to reduce students' anxiety in foreign language writing. Additionally, students needed to be addressed their logical feeling to learn and improve their self-efficacy belief in writing (Ho, 2016; Özkan & Da, 2015).

Table 1. Overall Level of Writing Anxiety

Level of Anxiety	N	Minimum Score	Maximum Score	M	SD
High Anxiety	24	86	110	92.88	6.92
Moderate Anxiety	130	61	85	71.86	6.76
Low Anxiety	65	35	60	52.49	6.46
				72.41	

Table 2. Writing Anxiety Based on Educational Level

Level of Anxiety	Educational Level								
	Middle School			High School			University		
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD
High Anxiety	12	71.16	4.91	9	92.7	10.47	11	89.72	5.96
Moderate Anxiety	44	68.18	8.41	45	68.31	7.86	70	66.77	8.40
Low Anxiety	8	48	9.51	10	46.44	6.24	12	44.91	6.68
		72.46			**74.21**			**71.56**	

Table 2 shows the differences in anxiety level among middle school, high school, and university students. Of the 219 students participated, the distributions are 62 middle school students, 64 high school students, and 93 university students. The mean score of middle school students is 72.46, high school 74.21, and university with a score of 71.56. By obtaining a mean score that is still in the range between 61-85 (see Table 1), all levels of education measured in this study are certainly at moderate anxiety levels. If it is seen at the proportion of each average score, then high school students tend to be more anxious in writing EFL than middle school and university students.

This result considerably quiet different since other studies (Guneyli, 2016; Min & Rahmat, 2014; Teksan, 2018) only provide the measurement for the two levels of anxiety, such as high and low. Then, for the comparison of educational levels, high school students tend to be more anxious compared to middle school and university students. The results are precisely contrary to the studies previously carried out by (Kurniasih, 2017; Rezaei & Jafari, 2014). They revealed that university students were more anxious than other students.

Table 3. Types of Anxiety-Based on Gender

| Type of Anxiety | Gender | | | | | |
| | Male | | | Female | | |
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD
Avoidance Behavior	56	21.79	4.64	163	21.55	4.45
Cognitive Anxiety	56	23.95	6.30	163	26.39	5.80
Somatic Anxiety	56	20.29	5.58	163	21.31	5.18

Table 3 provides specific information about the types of anxiety experienced by male and female students. Referring to the table, the ratio between the number of male and female students is very different, 56 and 163. The result informs that both male (M = 23.95) and female (M = 26.39) students experience cognitive anxiety in EFL writing. This findings asserted that EFL students in Indonesia possessed cognitive anxiety as well as the study by (Kurniasih, 2017; Rezaei and Jafari, 2014). Both of them obtain a higher mean score of cognitive anxiety compared to avoidance behavior and somatic anxiety. This indicates that both of them feel worried about the evaluation or other comments about the results of their writing. However, these findings were different from Ekmekçi (2018) and Min & Rahmat (2014) who mentioned somatic anxiety as the primary type acquired by EFL prospective teachers. They found it difficult to control the fear of writing. These feelings of fear affect their physiological symptoms such as nervousness, sweating, and feeling of trembling in certain parts of the body. They were likely to feel afraid of people negative comment than an acquired bad score or limit themselves not to write in English (Ekmekçi, 2018).

Table 4. Independent T-test based on Gender

| Types of Anxiety | t | Sig. (2-tailed) | M | |
			Male	Female
Cognitive Anxiety	2.661	0.008	3.30	2.99
Avoidance Behavior	-0.345	0.730	3.08	3.11
Somatic Anxiety	1.251	0.212	3.04	2.89

In order to see the differences of students' responses referring to demographic profile in the form of gender, independent T-test is used by inputting each subscale (types of anxiety) score. The analysis of independent T-test is conducted to explore the significant differences between EFL students writing anxiety among gender. The calculations indicate that there are significant differences between male and female students towards the types of anxiety. According to the table, it is clearly asserted that cognitive anxiety is significantly influenced by gender (t= 2.661, Sig.=0.008), nor avoidance behavior (t= -0.345, Sig.= 0.730) and somatic anxiety (t= 1.251, Sig.= 0.212). Moreover, male students (M= 3.30) are more likely to be anxious at the type of cognitive anxiety than female students (M= 2.99).

4 Conclusions

This study has been done on administering the types and levels of writing anxiety among EFL students in Indonesia. Based on the instruments that were adopted from Cheng (2004), the results of this study showed that EFL students as a whole were at a moderate level. As for the type of anxiety, they tend to experience anxiety issues in cognitive anxiety. In general, the results of this study are quite acceptable given the results of other studies (Y Cheng, 2004; Yuh-show Cheng, 2002; Ekmekçi, 2018; Guneyli, 2016; Ho, 2016; Kurniasih, 2017; Özkan & Da, 2015; Rezaei & Jafari, 2014; Teksan, 2018) that also helped the development of this study.

Concerning the findings, this study might offer insights into teachers teaching practices toward EFL writing inside of the pedagogical context. Understandably, this study has limitations which relate to the number of participants based on gender. Among the 219 participants involved, there were only 56 male students, while 163 female students contributed to this study. Therefore, further study is in place to involve a large number of male students as participants. With a comparatively similar ratio, the results can be more valid as expected. Moreover, further studies are required to shed more light on the investigation of the relationship between the type of anxiety which explained related to each level of writing anxiety. We also recommend further studies to apply for an interview session in order to verify the findings.

References

[1] Bell, J., & Waters, S. (2014). *Doing Your Reseacrh Project: a guide for first-time researchers* (Sixth). London: Open University Press. Retrieved from www.openup.co.uk

[2] Cheng, Y. (2004). A measure of second language writing anxiety: scale development and preliminary validation. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, *13*, 313–335. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2004.07.001

[3] Cheng, Yuh-show. (2002). Factors associated with foreign language writing anxiety. *Foreign Language Annals*, *35*(5), 647–656. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1944-9720.2002.tb01903.x

[4] Duijnhouwer, H., Prins, F. J., & Stokking, K. M. (2012). Feedback providing improvement strategies and reflection on feedback use: effects on students' writing motivation, process, and performance. *Learning and Instruction*, *22*, 171–184. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.learninstruc.2011.10.003

[5] Ekmekçi, E. (2018). Exploring Turkish EFL students ' writing anxiety. *An International Online Journal*, *18*(1), 158–175.

[6] Guneyli, A. (2016). Analyzing writing anxiety level of Turkish Cypriot students. *Education and Science*, *41*(183), 163–180. https://doi.org/10.15390/EB.2016.4503

[7] Ho, M. (2016). Exploring writing anxiety and self-efficacy among EFL graduate students in Taiwan. *Higher Education Studies*, *6*(1), 24–39. https://doi.org/10.5539/hes.v6n1p24

[8] Kara, S. (2013). Writing anxiety: a case study on students' reasons for anxiety in writing classes. *Anadolu Journal of Educational Sciences International*, *3*(January), 103–111.

[9] Kurniasih. (2017). Writing anxiety in relation to high performing students' English compositions. *Journal of English Language Teaching*, *1*(1), 1–8.

[10] Min, L. S., & Rahmat, N. (2014). English language writing anxiety among final year engineering undergraduates in University Putra Malaysia. *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, *5*(4), 102–106. https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.alls.v.5n.4p.102

[11] Özkan, K., & Da, G. (2015). An investigation of L2 learners' writing self-efficacy, writing anxiety and its causes at higher education in Turkey. *International Journal of Higher Education*,

4(2), 57–66. https://doi.org/10.5430/ijhe.v4n2p57

[12]   Parr, J. M., & Timperley, H. S. (2010). Feedback to writing, assessment for teaching and learning and student progress. *Assessing Writing*, *15*(2), 68–85. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.asw.2010.05.004

[13]   Rezaei, M., & Jafari, M. (2014). Investigating the levels, types , and causes of writing anxiety among Iranian EFL students: a mixed method design. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *98*, 1545–1554. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.03.577

[14]   Shang, H. (2013). Factors associated with English as a foreign language university students writing anxiety. *International Journal of English Language Teaching*, *1*(1), 1–12.

[15]   Teksan, K. (2018). Analysis of writing anxiety of secondary school students according to several variables. *Educational Research and Review*, *7*(22), 487–493. https://doi.org/10.5897/ERR12.065