

## Male And Female Differences Of Writing Anxiety

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### Abstract

This research aim to determine differences of writing anxiety and the cause factors behind the anxiety suffered by male and female students. The study is a quantitative study and adapted two types of questionnaires to collect the required data, (Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory) by Cheng (2004) and CSLWAI (Cause of Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory) by Rezaei and Jafari (2014). The subject of this study are 30 male students and 33 female students. The result showed that male students suffered cognitive anxiety, avoidance behavior anxiety and somatic anxiety. Meanwhile, female students suffered somatic anxiety and cognitive anxiety. Male students factors of writing anxiety are linguistic difficulties followed with writing techniques while female students only had writing techniques ad factors affecting their writing anxiety. In conclusion, male students had worse writing anxiety than female students. Therefore, develop teaching and learning method with the awareness of male and female students' writing anxiety is highly recommended in order for students to be able to learn English language effectively.

**Keywords:** Gender, Anxiety, Writing, Writing anxiety

### INTRODUCTION

English is the most spoken language in the world. The language used as lingua franca in global community (Alsalooli and Al- Tale', 2022). Therefore, become able to be fluent in English language is highly advantageous. However, mastering a non- native or foreign language is not an easy task. As a foreign language learner, learning a foreign language will cost a lot of patience, effort and time. Therefore, majority of Indonesian as a non- native English speaker, had difficulty in learning English language mostly in writing skill.

Writing is a skill that allowed students to convey their ideas, thoughts, or feelings through words. Writing is an ability to convey writer's intention through words and symbols (Reski et. all, 2021). It is a language skill that majority of Indonesian students had difficulty in learning. Writing skill is the most difficult to learn (Kusumaningputri, Ningsih and Wisasongko, 2018). Limited grammar and vocabulary knowledge and pressured by time mostly become major factor why students had little progress in learning writing skill. There are several reason why writing skill is difficult to learn such as find proper words and grammar, idea blockage, disability to link sentences, negative feedbacks and time constraint were some common problems students had to overcome in order to write effectively (Kusumaningputri, Ningsih and Wisasongko, 2018). Those factors prevent

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students to show progress in their learning, thus it made writing skill seem to have significantly high difficulty compared to other language skills, thus the believe made majority of students develop writing anxiety.

Anxiety refers to negative feelings due to certain stimulus. Anxiety is a combination of nervous, worry and uneasiness felling experienced by people and cause people to afraid in doing specific tasks (Sabti et. all, 2019). Anxiety can be suffered by anyone regardless of their gender, race, or age. Therefore, male and female students had similar possibility to develop anxiety in their learning. The fear of making mistakes or left behind can become the main trigger of the writing anxiety students' might suffered. Anxiety often triggered from certain fear people have and show symptoms from sweating, trembling, headache, and stomachache (Kurniasih, Cahyono, Astuti, Suryati, 2021; Syarifudin, 2020). Therefore, this study had two main objectives: 1) To determine what types of writing anxiety suffered by male and female students and 2) To determine what factors affect male and female students' writing anxiety.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study applied quantitative ex- post facto design. It was conducted at a Senior High School with total of participant are 63 students. However, the participant divided into 30 male students and 33 female students that all are in their second grade. This study aim to determine students' writing anxiety based on students' English knowledge, thus researcher did not conduct treatment to neither increase nor decrease students' English knowledge.

The data was collected through questionnaires. The questionnaires used adapted from SLWAI made by Cheng (2004) and CSLWAI made by Rezaei and Jafari (2014). The SLWAI (Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory) by Cheng (2004) used to identify types of writing anxiety ESL (English Second Language) students suffered. Based on Cheng (2004), writing anxiety classified into three types which are somatic anxiety, cognitive anxiety and avoidance behavior anxiety. The questionnaires had total 22 items. However, researcher adapted the questionnaires into 5 items, 1 item refers to somatic anxiety, 3 items refers to cognitive anxiety and 1 item refers to avoidance behavior anxiety that suitable for EFL (English Foreign Language) students. Meanwhile, the CSLWAI (Cause of Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory) made by Rezaei and Jafari (2014) used to identify factors that might affect students' writing anxiety. There were 10 factors mentioned in the questionnaires: teachers' negative feedback, fear of writing test, insufficient

practices, insufficient techniques, problem with the topic, linguistic difficulties, pressured to be perfect, pressured by time, low- confidence, and high- frequency tasks. However, researcher only used 4 items that researcher found the most often factors faced by EFL students. The 4 items chosen were ability to understand topic, time constraint, linguistic knowledge, writing techniques.

In order to determine the students' answer degree, the researcher adapted Likert scale. The scale had score 1 – 5 to represents students' answer to each questionnaire items. 1 represent 'Strongly Disagree', 2 represent 'Disagree', 3 represent 'Neutral', 4 represent 'Agree' and 5 represent 'Strongly Agree'. The questionnaires in form of Google Form. Thus, researcher handed the questionnaire through link that shared through Whatsapp application. Students responses collected in researcher Google Drive in form of Microsoft Excel sheet contained numbers 1 – 5 that represent students' answers.

Researcher used Microsoft Excel to calculate the numbers that would determine students answer based on interval analysis category. The category were: Strongly Disagree 0% – 19.99%, Disagree 0% - 39.99%, Neutral 40% - 59.99%, Agree 60% - 79.99% and Strongly Agree 80% - 100%. After that, researcher would tabulated the data with Product Moment Spearman of SPSS 20.0 program to find difference of male and female students' writing anxiety. The program used in order to find how strong and significant each type of writing anxiety effect on students' writing anxiety. This data would be used as prove to solidify this study result and determine which hypothesis would be accepted and which would be rejected.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Findings

#### a. Differences of male and female students' types of writing anxiety

**Table 1. Students' responses**

Categories	Male (%)	Female (%)
<b>Somatic</b>	64	72,72
<b>Cognitive</b>	67,33	64,84
<b>Avoidance</b>	64,66	60,6

Table 1 showed male and female students responses to questionnaires to identify their type of writing anxiety and factors affect the writing anxiety. From the responses, it could be seen that male students had almost equal number in three types of writing anxiety mentioned. They responses

the most to cognitive writing anxiety which is 67, 33%, followed by avoidance behavior writing anxiety 64,66% and last is somatic writing anxiety were 64%. Meanwhile, female students, had significantly high somatic writing anxiety which at 72,72% followed with cognitive writing anxiety at 64,84% and significantly low avoidance behavior anxiety which is 60,6%. Therefore, it could be said that male students had worse writing anxiety than female students because they had almost equal responses to three types of writing anxiety classified by Cheng (2004).

**Table 2. SPSS result**

Writing Anxiety	Male		Female	
	Co. (0,01)	Sig. (0,05)	Co. (0,01)	Sig. (0,05)
<b>S- C</b>	0,691	0,000	0,833	0,000
<b>C - AB</b>	0,540	0,002	0,400	0,021
<b>S - AB</b>	0,541	0,002	-0,280	0,114

Table 2 displayed male and female students' writing anxiety tabulated with SPSS 20.0 program. The significance numbers (Sig.) of male students tables were all below 0,05 showed that male students had develop writing anxiety. The result is 0,000 for somatic – cognitive (S-C) and each 0,002 for cognitive – avoidance behavior (C - AB) and somatic – avoidance behavior (S - AB) is in line with the result on Table 1 for male students. In addition, the similarity also showed from the coefficient (Co.) which S-C had the highest number which are 0,691 followed by S-AB with 0,541 and last C-AB with 0,541 that indicated male students writing anxiety the most is affected by cognitive writing anxiety followed by avoidance behavior writing anxiety and last is somatic writing anxiety.

Meanwhile for female students, the table also showed significant similarity with female students' responses showed in Table 1. The significance (Sig.) of somatic – cognitive (S-C) showed number of 0,000 and coefficient number (Co.) is the highest which is 0,833 indicated that female students had significantly high somatic writing anxiety and cognitive writing anxiety. The result is similar to table 1. In addition, in table 1, the avoidance behavior writing anxiety is had the lowest responses also reflect in table 2 result. The cognitive- avoidance behavior (C-AB) showed Sig. 0,021 and Co. 0,400 indicated the avoidance and cognitive writing anxiety had some effect to female students writing anxiety. However, the somatic – avoidance behavior (S-AB) showed Sig. 0,114 and Co. -

0,280 indicated that somatic and avoidance behavior almost had no relation and affect female students. Therefore, the SPSS result showed in Table 2 also showed that male students had worse writing anxiety than female students due to their high significance (Sig.) and coefficient (Co.) to three types of writing anxiety mentioned.

**b. Differences of male and female students' factors of writing anxiety**

**Table 3. Students' responses**

Categories	Male (%)	Female (%)
<b>Topic</b>	84	87,27
<b>Time</b>	82,66	86,66
<b>Linguistic</b>	74	81,81
<b>Technique</b>	70	73,33

Table 3 showed male and female students responses to factors that affect their writing anxiety. It could be seen that male students had two problems that affect their writing anxiety which are Linguistic 74% and Technique 70%, while female students only had one problem that is Techniques that showed 73,33%. Although the number is slightly higher, female students had lower concern of Linguistic problem. The result is in line with what types of writing anxiety suffered by male and female students in table 1 and 2 that found male students had worse writing anxiety with the highest anxiety is cognitive writing anxiety, while female students had highest somatic writing anxiety followed with cognitive writing anxiety.

**Table 4. SPSS result**

Writing Factors	Male		Female	
	Co. (0,01)	Sig. (0,05)	Co. (0,01)	Sig. (0,05)
<b>To – Ti</b>	0,904	0,000	0,833	0,000
<b>To – Li</b>	0,426	0,019	0,557	0,001
<b>To – Te</b>	0,553	0,002	0,405	0,019
<b>Ti – Li</b>	0,553	0,002	0,621	0,000
<b>Te – Ti</b>	0,604	0,000	0,467	0,006
<b>Li - Te</b>	0,788	0,000	0,706	0,000

Table 4 displayed students writing anxiety factors tabulated with SPSS 20.0 program. It could be seen that male students had good topic understanding (To), time constraint management (Ti) and slightly lower writing techniques (Te) and rather lower linguistic knowledge (Li). Writing techniques and linguistics are tightly related and common to easily showed in students writing. This is in line with result showed by table 1 and table 2 above that found male students had high cognitive writing anxiety followed by avoidance behavior anxiety and last is somatic writing anxiety. Meanwhile, female students showed low coefficient (Co) and significance in writing techniques (Te) that is in line with table 3. The condition also in line with finding in table 1 and table 2 that female students had high somatic writing anxiety and cognitive writing anxiety.

## **Discussion**

Writing anxiety refers to negative feeling that cause negative attitudes towards learning writing. Writing anxiety negatively affect students writing performance and motivation especially in academic setting (Hartono and Maharani, 2019). Based on the result above, researcher found that gender could affect students' writing anxiety. The result, were in line with some old researches (Hortwitz, Hortwitz and Cope, 1986; Williams, 1991; Cheng, 2002; Cheng, 2004). It means that although with the advancement of technology, majority of male and female students still found writing skill difficult, thus they build writing anxiety towards the skill.

Based on the study, male students suffered three types of writing anxiety. The findings were in line with several research (Reilly and Andrews, 2019; Cahyanto and Saputro, 2019; Hartono and Maharani, 2019). Male students had difficulty in learning a language. Majority of male students are right- brain person. Male biologically had good motor skill, high- tempered and right- brain person (Gurian, 2001). Male students' biological traits allowed them to calculate numbers. However, they required longer time in order to learn same amount of language knowledge with female students of the same age (Reilly and Andrews, 2019). Therefore, majority of male students cannot keep up with the learning process, thus develop high cognitive writing anxiety.

In addition to cognitive writing anxiety, male students also develop avoidance behavior anxiety and low somatic writing anxiety. Their disability to understand language faster made them had less confidence in their writing skill. Male had smaller hemisphere, a part of brain deals with language learning that made them difficult to understand a language without proper contexts

(Reilly and Andrews, 2019). Although they had better understanding ability a concept (Rumadani et. all, 2019) their brain disability to learn faster made them had lower linguistic knowledge than female students. As a result they felt hesitant to perform their writing skill and created low quality products (Kusumaningputri et. all, 2018; Al- Saadi,2020; Pratama et.all, 2020). Therefore, they build unpleasant feeling that develop into somatic writing anxiety (Kurniasih et. all, 2021). The unpleasant feelings then made male students difficult to think properly. Somatic anxiety they develop made them difficult to write (Wern and Rahmat, 2021) because the feelings would blocked writer's idea and made them felt stressed (Karlina and Pancoro, 2018). As a result, male students tend to find excuses to avoid performing their writing ability that indicated they developed avoidance behavior writing anxiety. Therefore, the higher cognitive writing anxiety male students suffered, the higher they had avoidance behavior anxiety that result in higher somatic writing anxiety they developed. The condition is in line with the result and tabulated data with SPSS 20.0 program.

Table 3 showed that male students had high linguistic problem and techniques that affect their writing anxiety that is in line with findings that male students had high cognitive anxiety and avoidance behavior anxiety. It mentioned above that majority of male student are right- brain, thus they biologically did not support to learn language efficiently. Therefore, they often had wide gap of knowledge compared to female students. So, male students often had low or incomplete linguistic knowledge and made them had difficulty in writing that would often showed in their poor writing products. Male students had lower lexical density and ability to make arrange sentences with correct marks (Pratama et. all, 2020; Rumadani et. all, 2019). In their Analytical Exposition writing, majority of male students showed their linguistic problem and writing techniques. Most of them had made various mistakes in spelling and punctuation as well as in grammar they used. These finding was different than research conducted by Faber and Hannover (2020) that showed male students' capability to evaluate their grammar capabilities after doing grammar tasks. The researcher found that majority of male students' mistakes was similar and repeated. They either misspelling or used wrong grammar, thus they repeatedly created low quality writing. This condition then steadily decrease their confidence in their writing ability. As a result, male students often produce shorter and brief texts. However, Argamon, Koppel, Fine and Shimoni (2003) found that male students had better abilities in writing formal writing. Their research found that males' writing was more specific and contained better information. However, in academic setting, male students had lower writing

skill than female students (Pratama, Dwiyantri and Manik, 2020; Omid et. all, 2022; Al- Saadi, 2020). Therefore, the findings in this research that was in line with various previous research conducted investigating male students' writing ability.

The opposite of male students capability to learn language, female students biologically had brain that highly support language learning. Experts such as Gurian (2001) in his book "Boys and Girls Learns Differently" explained in detailed how female brains supported female students to learn language faster and efficient. Research conducted by Reilly and Andrews (2019) also found that female students had better ability to learn language than male students in the same age. In line with them, there were various reseach that also found that female students had better ability in learning writing skill (Pratama, Dwiyantri and Manik, 2020; Omid et. all, 2022; Al- Saadi, 2020).

Female had better ability to learn language. Majority of female is left- brain person (Gurian,2001). They are faster in language learning and had better language learning as well as language knowledge. Female able to construct complicated and detailed texts due to their large lexical density (Pratama, Dwiyantri and Manik, 2020). In addition, their language ability is highly supported by their brains and neural systems. They had better brain parts and hormones that support their language learning (Gurian, 2001: 20- 26). However, due to their high ability to understand language, they often made misjudgment. Research conducted by Cahyanto et. all (2019) found that female students tended to have misconceptions in elements, compound and mixtures. This research found that female tended to made mistakes due to overwhelmed by pressure and stress. Female is an emotional person, thus they are weak to stress (Nelson and Burke, 2002). Their difficulty to control their emotion would effect in their ability to think clearly. As a result, although they had better linguistic knowledge, majority of female students failed to apply it in their writing due to overwhelmed by stress. Therefore, this study showed that female students had high somatic writing anxiety followed by slightly lower cognitive writing anxiety and low avoidance behavior writing anxiety.

Based on research result, female students' writing anxiety dominated by somatic writing anxiety folowed by cognitive writing anxiety. The somatic writing anxiety was a psychological type of anxiety that able to overwhelmed students with negative feelings such as fear and worry that prevent students to think properly. This findings is in line with a qualitative research conducted by Aripin and Rahmat (2021) which found female students often showed severe somatic writing anxiety. This finding also against various research conducted that found cognitive writing anxiety



was the highest anxiety students suffered (Syarifuddin, 2020; Wern and Rahmat, 2021). The research found that female students' high somatic anxiety due to their mindset to always showed excellent performance. They put high regard in their image and how people saw them. Female tend to be more self-imposed perfectionist that often put them into high stress (Nelson and Burke, 2002). This occasion especially true in language learning especially in performing writing ability. Female students with dominant left brain trait able to learn language through various occasion. They able to learn language through verbal conversation, written texts and gestures (Reilly and Andrews, 2019). This allowed them to have wider and deeper language knowledge. Therefore, in performing writing, female students tend to create long texts. Text made by female students tend to be longer and complicated than male students. (Pratama, Dwiyaniti and Manik, 2020; Omid et. all, 2003). Their traits allowed them to had wider and deeper lexical and linguistic knowledge thus they able to write better. However, female tendency to be perfect in work they done, often put pressure on them. In performing writing case, the pressure turned into anxious, stress, panic and dread feelings. This condition made their brain overthinking of possible answer. As a result, they would be overwhelmed and made mistakes instead. The misjudgment in recognizing vocabularies or grammar cause them to create low quality text, thus add the stress level when they had to perform their writing ability in the future. Female had ability to thing various things at once though it made them had high stress level (Nelson and Burke, 2002). This condition explained high somatic writing anxiety followed with high cognitive writing anxiety majority of female students' suffered.

Female students' high somatic and cognitive writing anxiety also refected in table 3 and 4. It means that majority of female students had good language knowledge but failed to apply it in their writing because their failure to manage their stress. Students who overwhelmed by panic, nervous or worried would failed to control their emotion, thus create poor quality writing (Aripin and Rahmat, 2021). Female students' negative feeling when performing writing was too excessive thus made them unable to think clearly and put doubt in their language knowledge. Although it did not affect their enjoyment in their learning to write. Despite their anxiousness, female students produce more writing compared to male students (Pratama, Dwiyaniti and Manik, 2020) showed their enjoyment in learning writing skill. Therefore, they had lowest avoidance behavior writing anxiety.

Female students high somatic anxiety symptoms could be seen during their mid- term period in which they had to write Analytical Exposition text. Majority of female students made certain facial expression and body movement that showed their anxious feeling toward their writing. Female students often made facial faces, body gestures and eye contact indicated their nervousness. (Aripin and Rahmat, 2021). They also often whispering the words they wrote. They often whispering words and showing body movement that signed to their high level of somatic writing anxiety. Meanwhile the low quality text result in their doubt to their language knowledge that directly affect to raise their cognitive writing anxiety. However, the doubt did not decrease their enjoyment in writing. Therefore, they had significantly low avoidance behavior anxiety compared to their somatic writing anxiety

## **CONCLUSIONS**

In conclusion, male students had worse writing anxiety due to more factors. They suffered three types of writing anxiety which are cognitive writing anxiety, avoidance behavior writing anxiety and somatic writing anxiety. Meanwhile, the factor behind the high writing anxiety are linguistic abilities and writing techniques. The high cognitive writing anxiety caused by lacking in language knowledge made male students had linguistic difficulties in writing so they had poor writing techniques. This high cognitive writing anxiety also trigger avoidance behavior writing anxiety because of the linguistic difficulties made them felt inferior, thus rather not performing their writing skill so they had less writing practice and experience. Then, the condition would trigger male students' somatic writing anxiety that is their negative feelings such as nervous or inferior they felt when they had to write.

On the other hand, female students suffered lower writing anxiety due to one dominant factor. They suffered somatic and cognitive writing anxiety due to writing techniques. Somatic writing anxiety made female student felt overly stress when they had to perform their writing ability and made them confuse and had poor writing techniques. Therefore, female students' cognitive writing anxiety was triggered by high level of somatic writing anxiety. However, the anxiety did not triggered female students to develop avoidance behavior anxiety.

The result of this study showed that male and female students had different types of writing anxiety and factors that effect to build the writing anxiety. Unfortunately, this study was not complete

yet. This study conducted only used quantitative method, thus researcher could not be specific enough in describing students' writing anxiety especially the factors behind their writing anxiety. Therefore, conduct various study with similar topic is highly recommended to help find better understanding in male and female students' language learning ability and find suitable teaching and learning method for language learning especially writing skill.

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