

Investigating Student's Attitudes and Performance in L2 Writing: An Insight from an EFL Tertiary Classroom in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Writing is often considered time-consuming and laborious for many EFL students. Writing as a language skill draws more attention to language acquisition because it demands a productive skill that students must acquire. Mastering exceptional writing skills, on the other hand, takes time. A variety of factors, including affective issues, may have an impact on a student's writing performance. According to cognitive psychologists and linguists, attitude is one aspect that influences performance when learning a foreign language. The success in L2 writing is related to attitudes, apprehension, and self-efficacy toward writing. This study aimed to explore the writing attitudes and performance of second-semester students enrolled in the Paragraph Writing Class at the Study Program of English, Faculty of Cultural Studies, Universitas Brawijaya. The study employed a correlation research design. To collect the required data, this research utilized a writing attitude questionnaire and a writing test that were analyzed by using SPSS. The findings indicate that there is a substantial positive correlation between the students' writing attitude and their writing performance. It is demonstrated by the Pearson correlation value of $0.666 > 0.05$ and the 2-tailed significant value of 0.000. As a result, it is possible to conclude that writing attitude is an excellent predictor of writing performance. The teacher should enhance the attitudes of the students in this study for them to accomplish better. Students would have a more positive attitude if they understand how it affects their learning performance.

Keywords: Students' Writing Attitude; Students' Writing Performance; Correlation Study

INTRODUCTION

Writing is frequently challenging for many EFL students. Students who write in their second language (L2) may experience social and cognitive challenges in addition to learning the language. Writing as a language skill draws more attention to language acquisition because it demands a productive skill that students must acquire. Mastering exceptional writing skills, on the other hand, takes time. Writing, according to Shah et al. (2011), is a highly complex and hard endeavor. Furthermore, writing is the hardest language skill for second language learners to acquire (Klimova, 2013). Certain procedures must be done during the writing process. Writing necessitates a number of cognitive, memory, linguistic, motor, and affective systems, each of which contributes to the writing process and the text generated (Singer, (2004); Graham and Fan (2012).

Previous research has discovered a correlation between a lack of L2 writing skills and social and cognitive issues. Because writing is a cognitive task, teachers can assist students in improving their writing skills by emphasizing the importance of solid writing skills in effective professional advancement (Safa, 2018). A writing teacher should provide and support excellent writing courses to assist students build skills and experience with successful writing processes. Woldemariam and Gupta (2011). Gustilo and Magno (2015) conducted empirical research to link L2 Writing Performance to series predictors. The study sought to determine whether text production processes (idea generation, idea encoding, idea/text revision, and idea transcription) could help to mitigate the influence of topic knowledge, linguistic knowledge, writing approach, and writing experience on L2

writing performance. Structural Equations Modeling results show that topic knowledge and linguistic knowledge have direct effects on writing performance and indirect effects on writing performance through the text production process. Writing method and writing experience have no direct impact on writing performance, but they do have an indirect influence on writing performance by text development processes.

This is supported by Rahmat et al. analysis (2017). One of their studies looked at how cognitive, contextual, and behavioral perspectives affected ESL learners in Malaysia. When it came to essay writing, the students found it difficult and spent a lot of time and effort to it. It was observed that cognitive and contextual interactions had a substantial impact on L2 writing performance competence. The learners' cognitive perspectives were influenced by their L1 writing, and the teacher's attitude toward the learners, such as the teacher's lack of enthusiasm and low competency, influenced their perspectives. When it comes to writing skills, the students said that writing introductions and conclusions was the most difficult. It is worth mentioning that the students considered punctuation in the introduction and conclusion to be a major barrier to their ESL writing.

Writing is an important expressive language skill that the learners perform using symbols that refer to voices (Bulut, 2017). Writing is an essential skill for the learners because it allows them to record, assimilate, and reformulate knowledge, as well as create and work through their ideas. It could be a means of discovering one's persona, being creative, and expressing oneself (Widiati and Cahyono (1998) as cited in Miller (2011). Moreover, Bulut (2017) claims that writing is viewed to be a sophisticated language skill. It needs a skill necessary for critical thinking, learning, and expression.

Academic writing is the kind of writing used in classes including college classes. Academic writing is different from creative writing and personal writing that refer to informal writing. However, academic writing is formal and has some rules such as in writing the learners should take care to write complete sentences and to organize them in a certain way (Oshima and Hogue, 2017)

In theory, attitude can influence writing ability by influencing factors such as cognitive engagement. The learners' attitude toward writing skills is heavily influenced by their writing attitude. Writing attitude highly effective in improving or hindering writing achievement. On writing tasks, students with positive attitudes outperform those with negative attitudes. Writing attitudes affect writing quality (Dhadodara, and Joshi, 2018).

The researchers looked into previous studies in a similar field, namely writing attitudes and writing achievement in EFL issues. The first study was conducted by Gaffari and Akbari (2018) entitled: 'The relationship between EFL learners' attitude, self-efficacy and their writing achievement. The study employed a correlational design. There was a statistically significant relationship between the students' attitude and their writing achievement, according to the findings. Students who were more enthusiastic about writing performed better in class.

The second study was conducted in 2012 by Dehbozorgi, Effects of attitudes towards language learning and risk-taking on EFL student's proficiency. This correlational study investigated the effect of attitude to language learning and risk-taking on EFL student's proficiency. The results showed that there was no significant relationship between the students' attitude towards language learning and language proficiency.

From the result of those two studies, it can be concluded that there is still needed further investigation to verify the existing theory. Then, the current study, like the two previous studies, will be a correlational study. However, the attitude scale used in this study is Podsen's writing attitude scale (1997). The subject of the study is also distinct from the two previous studies. This is considered to fill a gap left by the previous two studies.

Meanwhile, a number of elements, including affective factors, might have an impact on a student's writing success. One of the driving forces is an individual's mentality. According to cognitive psychologists and linguists, one factor that determines success when learning a new language is attitude. Progress in L2 writing, according to Erkan and Saban, is related to attitudes, anxiety, and self-efficacy toward writing (2011). There have been few research that investigate into

the relationship between writing attitudes and academic ability. There has been limited effort, such as a study done by Jabali (2018), in which he assessed students' views toward writing in a foreign language for general and academic purposes. However, the study's findings are still being debated. As a result, the current study is going to revisit and disclose the current condition of how students' attitudes and self-efficacy affect their writing competency. The aim of this study is to see if there is a relationship between students' writing attitudes and their performance in L2 writing at the university level, particularly in the setting of the English Study Program at Universitas Brawijaya.

METHODS

A correlation research design was used in the study. The variables in this study were the students' writing attitudes and their writing performance. An explanatory research design, according to Creswell (2012), is a correlational design in which the researcher is interested in the extent to which two factors (or more) co-vary, with changes in one reflecting changes in the other. Using this methodology, the researcher can evaluate the findings and draw conclusions about the relationship between students' writing attitudes and writing performance. As the sample, there were 33 students of paragraph writing class. This study used a writing attitude questionnaire and a writing test to acquire the necessary data. The writing attitudes questionnaire was adapted from the work of Podsén (1997), which we contextualized to our research setting. The questionnaire used a 5-point Likert-style response scale. The questionnaires with answers ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. There are 12 items (2,3,7,8,9,10,12,13,16,17,18, and 20) which state positive statements regarding feelings to writing and 8 items (1,4,5,6,11,14,15, and 19) are negative statements. Following that, students' writing performance was defined as the results of their essay writing test. To examine the students' writing ability, the researcher devised a writing test designed by the teachers. In addition, the teacher created a writing rubric adapted from CEFR writing rubric that underwent review by an expert to ensure content validity. The writing rubric would be used by the researcher and one inter-rater to grade the students' writing tests. The questionnaire data and writing performance results were placed into an excel spreadsheet and statistically analyzed using SPSS to obtain the correlation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Results

1.1 Students' Writing Attitude

The students' writing attitude was one of the variables for this correlation in this study, as shown in this section. We present the results of the questionnaire on students' writing attitudes, item by item. We are using five Likert scales here, with a maximum score of 5 for each item. The table is made into two categories for each containing a positive response and a negative response

TABLE 1. The Students' Questionnaire Responses per Item

Negative statements			
Item	Statements	Total score	Percentage
1	I avoid writing whenever possible	70	24 %
4	I am afraid of writing when I know it might be evaluated.	81	49 %
5	My mind seems to go blank when I start writing	97	58 %
6	Expressing my ideas through writing is a waste of time.	52	31 %
11	I am nervous about my writing.	108	65 %
14	I never seem to be able to write down my ideas clearly.	87	53 %
15	I am not a good writer	107	65 %
19	I don't think I write as well as most people.	124	75 %
Positive Statements			
Item	Statements	Total score	Percentage
2	I have no fear of my writing being evaluated	123	75 %

3	I look forward to writing down my ideas.	139	84 %
7	I would enjoy submitting my writing to magazines for evaluation and publication.	101	61 %
8	I like to write my ideas down	125	76 %
9	I feel confident in my ability to express my ideas in writing.	112	68 %
10	I like to have my friends read what I have written.	121	73 %
12	People seem to enjoy what I write	102	62 %
13	I enjoy writing	130	79 %
16	I like seeing my thoughts on paper	123	75 %
17	Discussing my writing with others is an enjoyable experience.	127	77%
18	It is easy for me to write good letters	97	59%
20	Writing is a lot of fun.	131	79%

Based on the grading criteria, all responses were assigned a value of 1 to 5. Consider the positive statement demonstrating the student's writing attitude. A strong agree answer received 5 points, whereas a strong disagree answer received 1 point. When the statement was negative, the scoring procedure was reversed. The results of the overall questionnaire response for each individual are presented in the following table.

TABLE 2. The Students' Writing Attitude Score

Respondent	Students' Writing attitude score
1.	67
2.	71
3.	69
4.	67
5.	68
6.	68
7.	64
8.	64
9.	71
10.	66
11.	69
12.	65
13.	63
14.	68
15.	59
16.	63
17.	61
18.	63
19.	75
20.	64
21.	60
22.	67
23.	69
24.	66
25.	64
26.	62
27.	63
28.	68
29.	64
30.	71
31.	58
32.	59
33.	62

From the results of the writing test obtained a score that has a range of 58-75

1.2 Students' Writing Performance

The writing performance of students is determined by the writing test for the final exam. To eliminate bias in the assessment outcomes, the test results were examined by two raters to ensure their reliability. The following table contains the results of the final writing test.

TABLE 3.Students' Writing Final Test

No.	Rater	Rater	Writing Scores
	1	2	
1.	81	80	81
2.	84	84	84
3.	82	84	83
4.	81	83	82
5.	80	82	81
6.	83	81	82
7.	80	80	80
8.	81	79	80
9.	83	81	82
10.	82	80	81
11.	83	83	83
12.	78	81	80
13.	76	78	77
14.	82	80	81
15.	80	78	79
16.	79	79	79
17.	80	80	80
18.	78	80	79
19.	82	80	81
20.	79	81	80
21.	79	81	80
22.	81	81	81
23.	81	83	82
24.	84	85	83
25.	79	79	79
26.	78	80	79
27.	81	79	80
28.	80	82	81
29.	79	81	80
30.	81	81	81
31.	80	80	80
32.	79	81	80
33.	81	79	80

From the table above, it can be deduced that the students' writing abilities are roughly equal, ranging from 79 to 83. This demonstrates their excellent writing abilities. Also, the findings of the CEFR-based writing assessment rubric have been met.

1.3 The Correlation between Writing Attitudes and the Students' Writing Performance

This section displayed the statistical computation results to answer the research question about the relationship between students' writing attitudes and writing performance.

TABLE 4. Variables Normality Test

Case Processing Summary						
	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
WritingAttitude	33	100.0%	0	0.0%	33	100.0%
Performance	33	100.0%	0	0.0%	33	100.0%

Tests of Normality			
		Shapiro-Wilk	
		Statistic	Sig.
WritingAttitude		0.978	0.735
Performance		0.942	0.080

* This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

The first step in assessing the hypothesis correlation is to conduct a normality test on the two variables, which are the students' writing attitude and writing performance. From the table, there are 33 participants. The writing attitude was 0.735 and the writing performance was 0.08 according to the Shapiro-Wilk significance test. Both results are greater than 0.05. As a result, it is possible to conclude that the data in this study was normally distributed. Because the students' writing attitudes and performance were normally distributed, the second step was to do an ANOVA linearity test to see if the interaction between the two variables was linear. The results are presented in the table below.

TABLE 5. ANOVA

Case Processing Summary						
	Cases					
	Included		Excluded		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Performance* Writing Attitude	33	100.0%	0	0.0%	33	100.0%

ANOVA Table							
			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Perform- ance* Writing Attitude	Bet- ween Gro- ups	(Combined)	52.336	13	4.026	4.999	0.001
		Linearity	30.011	1	30.011	37.269	0.000
		Deviation from Linearity	22.325	12	1.860	2.310	0.050
	Within Groups		15.300	19	0.805		
	Total		67.636	32			

* This is a lower bound of the true significance.

The variables, students' writing attitude and performance, were discovered to be linear. Because the deviation from linearity was 0.05, it is reasonable to conclude that both variables, the students' writing attitude and performance, had a linear relationship.

The next step was to evaluate the homoscedasticity assumptions of both variables. The goal was to achieve a condition in which the residual variance in a regression model was constant. While a result, as the predictor variable's value varied, the error term did not change considerably. The table below shows the results of the homoscedasticity test.

TABLE 6.Testing the Homoscedasticity

Coefficients ^a					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	-1.211	2.149		-0.564	0.577
WritingAttitude	0.031	0.033	0.165	0.931	0.359

b. Dependent Variable: Abs_Res

According to the table, the significant value of the students' writing attitudes was $0.359 > 0.05$. As a result, the variables were the same for all of the data.

After assessing normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity between those two variables, the Pearson Product Moment was employed to calculate the degree of correlation between students' writing attitude and their writing performance. The computation results for the correlation of the two variables are presented in the table below.

TABLE 7.Correlation between the Students' Writing Attitude and the Writing Performance

Correlations			
		Writing_Attitude	Performance
Writing_Attitude	Pearson Correlation	1	.666**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	33	33
Performance	Pearson Correlation	.666**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	33	33

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

According to the table, the alternative hypothesis that there is a statistically significant correlation between students' writing attitudes and their writing performance was accepted. This was supported by the Pearson correlation value of $0.666 > 0.05$ and the 2-tailed significant value of 0.000.

2. Discussion

This subsection contains the discussion to address the research question. Based on the data, it was determined that the alternative hypothesis stating that there is a statistically significant association between students' attitudes and their writing performance was accepted. The findings show that students' attitudes had an impact on their achievement in this sample. In this study, it was also discovered that the participants were eager to improve their writing skills. They had no negative

perceptions of the writing evaluation procedure. The students' attitudes toward their writing performance appeared to be positive.

The finding of the study was quite different from the study conducted by Dehbozorgi (2012). His result of the study showed that the relationship between proficiency level and attitude toward language learning was not significant, this study claimed that English performance could not be easily predicted from attitudinal measures. Attitudes toward language learning and language proficiency cannot always affect each other. Some personal factors such as, social factors.

However, this study has the same result as the study conducted by Gaffari and Akbari (2018). Both of the studies have a statistically significant relationship between the students' attitude and their writing achievement, according to the findings. Students who were more enthusiastic about writing performed better in class. Students' positive attitude toward writing impact on their writing achievement.

Abidin et al. (2012) mention that the students' mastery in a certain language is not only affected by the mental competence or language skills but also on the students' attitude and perceptions to the target language. Thus, cognitive and affective aspects are very crucial in language learning, especially in this case is related to writing. The students' attitude toward writing can affect how students behave during the learning writing process. The ability of the students to achieve a good L2 writing skill influences their attitudes and their perceptions to the target language.

Certain implications may be derived for teachers based on the findings of this study. Teachers should recognize and appreciate that students in L2 writing classes have their attitudes. Teachers should provide more encouragement to students to motivate them to achieve higher L2 writing achievement. As a result, students are more motivated to study and perform better on L2 writing tasks.

Teachers are expected to recognize their students' writing attitudes to promote and develop students' learning ability in the L2 writing class as the outcomes of their learning. To increase a more positive attitude in their students, teachers should become closer to them. Teachers, particularly in writing classes, are advised to encourage students to be more open and discuss their learning challenges. As a result, it is expected that challenges experienced by students during the learning process will be resolved by establishing strong connections between teachers and students. As they complete the course with excellent writing performance, students' positive attitude toward L2 writing is expected to improve. Teachers can use a variety of writing activities to enhance students' positive attitudes toward L2 writing in terms of teaching and learning activities. Furthermore, even in L2 writing class, teachers are encouraged to provide more support and build students' confidence in reaching their goals. Teachers can create meaningful relationships with their students by knowing their emotional needs and encouraging them to put out their best effort to attain higher learning outcomes.

CONCLUSION

According to the current study's findings and discussion, there is a significant correlation between students' writing attitudes and writing performance. The positive correlation between students' writing attitudes and writing performance demonstrates that students who have a positive writing attitude are more likely to have a positive writing performance. As a result of this study, it is reasonable to conclude that writing attitude is a reliable indicator of writing quality. For the students in this study to perform better, the teacher needs to modify students' mindsets. Students will have a more positive attitude if they understand that a positive attitude helps them learn more effectively. Other factors that were not taken into account in this study could have an impact on students' writing skills. External variables include anxiety, student background, and socioeconomic circumstances. In addition, we suggest some points for future researchers. In determining the sample size, future researchers can gather more respondents to obtain a clearer picture of the relationship between factors. Future researchers can then carry out the study in a variety of ways. Finally, other emotional components can be added to provide more detailed results about issues that

may influence students' overall achievement. Furthermore, there is no comparison group in this study. As a result, future studies should include a control group.

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