

**THE CORRELATION BETWEEN WRITING ANXIETY AND
WRITING SKILLS AMONG 10TH GRADE STUDENTS AT
SMAN 2 KEDIRI IN THE 2025/2026 ACADEMIC YEAR**

THESIS

Submitted to Fulfill Part of the Requirements
To Obtain a Bachelor of Education Degree (S.Pd.)
In the English Language Education Study Program



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2026

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STATEMENT

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I declare that this thesis does not contain any work that has been previously submitted for a bachelor's degree at any university, and to the best of my knowledge, it does not contain any written work or opinions previously published by others, except those that are intentionally and explicitly cited in this manuscript and listed in the bibliography.

Kediri, July 14th 2026

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MOTTO AND DEDICATION

Motto:

“All that is gold does not glitter, not all those who wander are lost; the old that is strong does not wither, deep roots are not reached by the frost. The world beholds the blade remade, yet only the smith knows the solitary fire that tried this pure gold.”

(Aragorn), *The Lord of the Rings*)

Dedication:

This thesis is dedicated to:

1. Myself, for not quitting, no matter how tough the journey was to reach this point.
2. My parents who supporting and encouraging me to finish my thesis.
3. Last but not least to all my friends who is walking and fighting in this journey together.

ABSTRACT

Michael David Christian THE CORRELATION BETWEEN WRITING ANXIETY AND WRITING SKILLS AMONG 10TH GRADE STUDENTS AT SMAN 2 KEDIRI IN THE 2025/2026 ACADEMIC YEAR, Thesis, FKIP UN PGRI Kediri, 2026.

Keywords: writing anxiety; writing ability; descriptive text; correlational study; senior high school students

This study was motivated by the researcher's empirical observations in class X-1 at SMAN 2 Kediri, which revealed a tense learning environment where students faced significant psychological barriers. Although the students were naturally interactive, quick-witted, and grasped language concepts rapidly, the classroom atmosphere felt socially constrained and emotionally heavy. The students experienced acute performance anxiety, making them incredibly shy to present their work due to a deep-seated fear of peer mockery. This pervasive fear of being laughed at created a severe psychological block that suppressed their communication confidence, ultimately manifesting as elevated writing anxiety and restricting their English language performance.

The problems of this research are formulated as follows: How is the students' writing anxiety level? How is the students' descriptive text writing skill? Is there a significant correlation between writing anxiety and writing skills among the tenth-grade students of SMAN 2 Kediri? To address these questions, this research utilized a quantitative approach with a correlational design, focusing on a purposive sample of 34 students from class X-1. Data were gathered utilizing a 10-item questionnaire adapted from the Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) and a descriptive text writing performance test.

The findings of this study indicate that, the students experience a moderate level of writing anxiety with a mean score of 33.65, the students demonstrate a fair level of descriptive writing skill with a mean score of 75.12, and there is a statistically significant, strong negative correlation between the variables ($r = -.710$, $p < .001$), meaning higher anxiety systematically reduces writing performance. Based on these findings, it is recommended that English teachers should prioritize creating low anxiety environments and providing pre-writing scaffolding, while future researchers should explore specific instructional methods to mitigate writing anxiety.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

First and foremost, the writer expresses sincere gratitude to God Almighty for His abundant grace, mercy, and blessings, which have enabled the writer to complete this thesis entitled **“The Correlation between Writing Anxiety and Writing Skills Among 10th Grade Students at SMAN 2 Kediri in the 2025/2026 Academic Year”**

The completion of this thesis would not have been possible without the support, guidance, motivation, and encouragement of many individuals. Therefore, the writer would like to express heartfelt appreciation and gratitude to:

1. Dr. Zainal Afandi, M.Pd., the Rector of University of Nusantara PGRI Kediri, for providing the opportunity to pursue higher education at the university.
2. Dr. Agus Widodo, M.Pd., the Dean of the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, for his continuous support and encouragement to all students in completing their studies.
3. Dr. Khoiriyah, M.Pd., the Head of the English Language Education Study Program, for her guidance, motivation, and valuable advice throughout the process of writing this thesis.
4. Dr. Suhartono, M.Pd., as the first thesis supervisor, for his patience, valuable suggestions, constructive feedback, and continuous guidance from the beginning until the completion of this thesis.
5. Dr. Diani Nurhajati, M.Pd., as the second thesis supervisor, for generously dedicating her time, knowledge, and expertise in providing insightful guidance, suggestions, and encouragement throughout the completion of this thesis.
6. All lecturers and staff of the English Language Education Study Program, University of Nusantara PGRI Kediri, for providing knowledge, experience, academic support, and an enjoyable learning environment during the writer's study.

7. The Headmaster of SMAN 2 Kediri at that time, Drs. Sarbawa, M.Pd., and Luk Brown Akbar Taroz S.S., who have provided invaluable assistance to the researcher, as well as all teachers of SMAN 2 Kediri for their kindness in granting the researcher permission and opportunity to conduct this research at the school.
8. The writer's beloved parents, family, friends, and colleagues, for their endless prayers, love, motivation, and unwavering support throughout the process of completing this thesis. The writer also extends sincere gratitude to everyone who cannot be mentioned individually but has contributed through their assistance, prayers, and support, making the completion of this thesis possible.
9. Special thanks to John Michael Howell, whose song 'Story of A Warrior' served as essential background inspiration during this thesis's completion.
10. And the last, for myself who was not surrendering and be able to complete this thesis.

The writer realizes that this thesis is still far from perfect. Therefore, constructive criticism and suggestions are sincerely welcomed for future improvement. It is hoped that this thesis will be beneficial to readers and serve as a valuable reference for future research in the field of education, particularly in English language learning.

Kediri, 14 July 2026

MICHAEL DAVID CHRISTIAN
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents several sub-sections, including the background of the study, research questions, objectives of the study, and significance of the study. Each section explains the foundation and direction of the research.

A. Background of the Study

In this modern era, English writing proficiency is widely regarded as an essential skill that enables students to express complex ideas, construct logical arguments, and actively engage in academic discourse (Aldayel, 2024; Seow, 2002). Writing functions not only as a means of communication but also as a tool for critical thinking and knowledge development, particularly in educational (An, 2024a; Stephen D Krashen, 2004). Ideally, students who have adequate mastery of vocabulary and grammar are expected to produce well-organized and coherent texts. Although many students demonstrate competence in spoken English, they often encounter difficulties when required to write (Arisman, 2023; Sun, 2024). This condition indicates that underlying psychological factors may play a crucial role in shaping students' writing performance.

From a theoretical perspective, writing is categorized as a productive skill that involves complex interactions between cognitive processes and affective factors (Aldayel, 2024; Seow, 2002). Stephen D Krashen (2004) explains through the Affective Filter Hypothesis that emotional variables such as anxiety, motivation, and self-confidence significantly influence language acquisition and performance. When anxiety levels increase, the affective filter becomes stronger and limits students' ability to utilize their linguistic knowledge effectively (An, 2024; Stephen D Krashen, 2004). Recent studies support this theory by showing that anxiety disrupts cognitive processing

during writing tasks, particularly under time pressure (An, 2024; Sun, 2024). Permendikbudristek No. 12 of 2024 emphasizes that tenth-grade students are expected to produce functional texts as part of English learning competence. In practice, the classroom reality at SMAN 2 Kediri shows that students' actual writing performance does not fully reflect this expectation. This indicates that writing ability is not only influenced by linguistic knowledge, but also by psychological factors.

Writing is a complex communicative activity that requires the integration of linguistic knowledge, cognitive strategies, and sociocultural understanding (Aldayel, 2024; Seow, 2002). It is not a linear process but a recursive one that includes stages such as planning, drafting, revising, and editing (Seow, 2002). Throughout these stages, students must generate ideas, organize them logically, select appropriate vocabulary, and ensure grammatical accuracy (Aldayel, 2024; Muamaroh et al., 2020). This multifaceted nature makes writing one of the most challenging skills for EFL learners (Aldayel, 2024; Arisman, 2023). Research has shown that students often struggle with idea organization and coherence due to the high cognitive demands involved in writing tasks (Aldayel, 2024; Marlina, 2024). These challenges may become even more significant when students simultaneously experience psychological pressure during the writing process.

In classroom practice, these theoretical challenges appear in the way students respond to writing tasks. During writing activities, many students were seen staring at blank papers for extended periods, indicating difficulty in initiating their writing (An, 2024; Sun, 2024). On the other hand, some students frequently checked the time and appeared restless, suggesting the presence of anxiety. These behaviors were particularly evident when students were required to complete writing tasks within a limited time frame (An, 2024; Irawati, 2022). Under such conditions, students often experience what is commonly referred to as a “mental block,” where they are unable to

generate ideas. This phenomenon reflects how anxiety can directly interfere with students' cognitive processes during writing activities.

The influence of writing anxiety can also be observed through students' behavioral patterns during writing tasks (Cheng, 2004; Suhartoyo, 2023). Some students are unable to produce even a single sentence due to fear of making mistakes or receiving negative evaluation. Others repeatedly revise their sentences, which disrupts their concentration and slows down their writing process. These patterns suggest that anxiety affects not only cognitive processes but also writing fluency (Cheng, 2004; Irawati et al., 2022). Empirical studies indicate that students with higher levels of anxiety tend to produce texts that are less coherent and less accurate (Alharbi, 2021; Suhartoyo, 2023). Such behaviors imply that anxiety reduces students' willingness to take risks in writing, even though risk-taking is essential for language development.

The relationship between writing anxiety and writing ability can be explained through the concept of cognitive interference (An, 2024; Irawati, 2022). Anxiety consumes working memory resources that are essential for organizing ideas, retrieving vocabulary, and constructing sentences. When working memory capacity is reduced, students experience greater difficulty in completing writing tasks effectively. This leads to lower writing quality and reduced task performance (Guo et al., 2025; Irawati et al., 2022). Previous studies consistently report a significant negative correlation between writing anxiety and writing ability (An, 2024; Guo, 2025). This suggests that managing anxiety should be considered an integral part of improving students' writing skills.

Previous research has extensively explored writing anxiety in EFL contexts, including studies conducted by Arisman (2023) and Hanani (2023). These studies confirm that anxiety negatively affects students' writing performance. However, most of these studies focus on general classroom settings or higher education contexts (An, 2024; Guo, 2025). Limited

attention has been given to situational factors such as time constraints in senior high schools. In practice, writing tasks in Indonesian schools are often conducted under strict time limits (Irawati et al., 2022; Sun, 2024). This condition suggests that time pressure may be an important factor that intensifies students' anxiety levels.

Therefore, a research gap can be identified in relation to situational writing anxiety among high school students (An, 2024; Sun, 2024). To address this gap, the present study focuses on tenth-grade students and examines the relationship between writing anxiety and writing ability. Specifically, it examines the relationship between writing anxiety and writing ability under time-limited conditions (Guo et al., 2025; Irawati et al., 2022). By doing so, the study provides a more contextualized understanding of writing anxiety. This focus allows for a deeper analysis of how situational factors influence students' performance. Consequently, the findings are expected to offer more realistic insights into classroom practices.

Writing anxiety is recognized as a multidimensional construct consisting of cognitive, somatic, and avoidance components (Aldayel, 2024; Cheng, 2004). Cognitive anxiety relates to fear of negative evaluation, while somatic anxiety refers to physical symptoms such as tension and nervousness. Avoidance behavior reflects students' tendency to avoid writing tasks (Alharbi, 2021; Cheng, 2004). These components interact and collectively influence writing performance. Situational factors such as time pressure can intensify these dimensions (Aldayel, 2024b; An, 2024a). Understanding these dimensions is essential for developing more effective instructional strategies.

Based on the observed phenomena, several key problems can be identified in the classroom context. These include students' mental blocks, fear of making mistakes, and pressure caused by time limitations during writing tasks (Irawati et al., 2022; Sun, 2024). To keep the scope of the research clear, this study is limited to tenth-grade students in the 2025/2026 academic year. The research specifically examines the correlation between

writing anxiety and writing ability (An, 2024a; Guo et al., 2025). Other variables are not included in order to ensure a more focused analysis. This limitation helps improve the accuracy and reliability of the findings.

To address these challenges, both theoretical and practical solutions can be proposed (Aldayel, 2024; Marlina, 2024). Teachers are encouraged to implement strategies that reduce anxiety, such as creating a supportive learning environment and providing constructive feedback. In addition, students should develop self-regulation strategies to manage their anxiety during writing tasks (Irawati et al., 2022; Rasuan & Wati, 2021). Techniques such as planning and relaxation can help improve their performance. This study employs a quantitative correlational design to examine the relationship between writing anxiety and writing ability. The findings are expected to contribute to more effective and psychologically informed teaching practices.

B. Research Question

Based on the background of the study, the researcher formulates the following questions:

1. What is the level of writing anxiety experienced by 10th grade students at SMAN 2 Kediri?
2. What is the writing ability of 10th students at SMAN 2 Kediri in writing descriptive texts based on their writing test scores?
3. Is there a significant correlation between students' writing anxiety and their writing ability?

C. Objective of the Study

In line with the research questions, the objectives of this study are:

1. To identify the level of writing anxiety among 10th grade students at SMAN 2 Kediri.
2. To identify the writing ability of 10th students at SMAN 2 Kediri in writing descriptive texts based on their writing test scores.

3. How to find out whether there is a significant correlation between writing anxiety and the writing ability of the students.

D. Significance of the Study

This section explains the benefits and importance of the research. The significance of this study is divided into two parts, namely theoretical significance and practical significance.

1. Theoretical Significance

From the theoretical perspective, this study is expected to give a contribution to the development of English language education, especially in relation to writing anxiety and students' writing ability. The findings may offer a deeper understanding of how psychological factors can influence students' performance in writing activities. This study also emphasizes that students' difficulties in writing are not only related to linguistic aspects, such as grammar, vocabulary, and sentence construction, but also to emotional conditions. In this sense, the research may support and enrich previous studies concerning anxiety in English as Foreign Language learning. Moreover, the results can provide insight into how anxiety may affect students when organizing ideas, developing paragraphs, and completing writing tasks. This study can also serve as an additional reference for future researchers who are interested in similar topics. Furthermore, it may become a useful basis for further studies that examine psychological barriers in language learning. Therefore, this research is expected to provide a meaningful theoretical contribution to the study of writing anxiety and writing ability.

2. Practical Significance

From the practical perspective, this study is expected to provide useful benefits for teachers, students, and the institution.

- a. For the Teachers: To provide a new insight that students' performance is not just about their skills, but also about their emotional well-being. This can help teachers develop more supportive teaching strategies.
- b. For the Students: To help students understand that feeling anxious is a common hurdle in learning a language. By recognizing this feeling, they can learn to manage it more professionally.
- c. For the Institution: To provide concrete data that can help SMAN 2 Kediri in creating a more conducive and modern learning environment for English subjects.

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