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Corresponding Author:
Waluyo
waluyo.info97@gmail.com

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

THE EFFECT OF WRITING APPREHENSION AND SELF-REGULATED LEARNING TOWARDS EFL STUDENTS DESCRIPTIVE TEXT WRITING SKILLS (A Survey at Private Islamic Junior High Schools in South Tangerang)

Waluyo¹,

Universitas Indraprasta PGRI, Jl. TB Simatupang, Jakarta 12530

Hasbullah²,

Universitas Indraprasta PGRI, Jl. TB Simatupang, Jakarta 12530

Baron Rifari³,

Universitas Indraprasta PGRI, Jl. TB Simatupang, Jakarta 12530

e-mail: waluyo.info97@gmail.com ¹

e-mail: hasbullah@unindra.ac.id ²

e-mail: rifari.baron@unindra.ac.id ³

Abstract: This study examined how writing apprehension and self-regulated learning influence students' ability in writing descriptive texts at private Islamic junior high schools in South Tangerang. Using a quantitative survey design, 90 students were chosen through proportional random sampling. Data were collected with three instruments: a questionnaire on learning strategies, a scale of reading interest, and a descriptive writing test. Multiple regression analysis revealed three key findings: (1) writing apprehension significantly affected descriptive writing skills (Sig. = 0.037; t = 2.331), (2) self-regulated learning also had a significant influence (Sig. = 0.019; t = 2.567), and (3) both variables together strongly contributed to writing achievement (Sig. = 0.000; F = 96.161). Overall, the study highlights that internal learning factors and self-regulation are crucial in improving students' English descriptive writing performance.

Keywords: Writing Apprehension, Self-Regulated Learning, Descriptive Text Writing Skill.

Pengaruh Kecemasan Menulis dan Pembelajaran Mandiri terhadap Keterampilan Menulis Teks Deskriptif Siswa Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing (Survei pada Madrasah Tsanawiyah Swasta di Kota Tangerang Selatan).

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis pengaruh kecemasan menulis dan kemandirian belajar terhadap keterampilan menulis teks deskriptif siswa SMP Islam swasta di Tangerang Selatan. Metode yang digunakan adalah kuantitatif dengan pendekatan survei. Sampel penelitian berjumlah 90 siswa yang dipilih melalui proportional random sampling. Data dikumpulkan menggunakan angket strategi belajar, skala minat membaca, dan tes menulis deskriptif. Hasil analisis regresi berganda menunjukkan: (1) kecemasan menulis berpengaruh signifikan terhadap kemampuan menulis deskriptif (Sig. = 0,037; t = 2,331), (2) kemandirian belajar juga berpengaruh signifikan (Sig. = 0,019; t = 2,567), dan (3) keduanya secara simultan memberikan kontribusi besar (Sig. = 0,000; F = 96,161). Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa

INTRODUCTION

In learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL), writing skills are essential alongside speaking, listening, and reading. Writing involves not just putting letters on paper but organizing words into syntactically correct sentences and coherent paragraphs. Strong writing abilities support students' academic success because their written work documents their learning process (Ramadhani & Hafifah, 2022; Afifah et al., 2022). However, many students find writing challenging and overwhelming due to its complexity (Gaffar et al., 2023). Writing difficulties include errors in content, organization, and grammar, which hinder clear and coherent idea expression (Sasmita & Setyowati, 2021). Additionally, students often experience frustration when starting to write (Morgan, as cited in Ashrafiany et al., 2021). Therefore, developing writing skills should be a top educational priority, supported by positive teacher feedback and the implementation of self-regulated learning (Zeevy-Solovey, 2024; Guo & Bai, 2022; Aprilia et al., 2023).

Although previous studies have explored writing apprehension and self-regulated learning, a gap remains in understanding their interaction at the junior high school level. Most research focuses on higher education or younger students, necessitating studies on how these factors affect EFL junior high students in South Tangerang. This study aims to fill that gap by investigating the influence of writing apprehension and self-regulated learning on students' writing skills (Risqy Nur Febrianti, 2022; Kim, 2006).

Writing apprehension negatively affects students' writing quality and confidence, often causing reluctance to engage in writing tasks (Risqy Nur Febrianti, 2022). Conversely, self-regulated learning empowers students to manage their learning process—from planning to evaluating their writing—thus reducing anxiety (Zeevy-Solovey, 2024; Wijaya, 2021). Combining constructive teacher feedback and self-regulated learning strategies creates a supportive environment that enhances writing skills (Aprilia et al., 2023; Zahroh et al., 2020).

A lack of writing experience and skills, especially in grammar and vocabulary, also contributes to writing anxiety (Gaffar et al., 2023). Teachers should foster a safe learning environment where students can practice writing without fear of mistakes (Nur Izzati Fajriyah, 2023). Social support from peers and teachers is crucial in reducing anxiety caused by social pressures (McCarthy et al., 2021). This study hopes to offer practical recommendations for educators to improve EFL students' writing abilities through targeted interventions in South Tangerang junior high schools.

This study focuses on the influence of writing apprehension and self-regulated learning on students' English writing skills, particularly among eighth-grade students in private junior high schools in Pamulang, South Tangerang. The research addresses several related challenges such as topic selection uncertainty, fear of evaluation, motivation, vocabulary and grammar mastery, and learning styles, but limits its scope to the effects of writing apprehension (X1) and self-regulated learning (X2) on writing skills (Y). This quantitative study seeks to provide a clear, measurable framework to explore these variables and their combined impact on students' writing abilities.

The research questions aim to determine the effects of writing apprehension alone, self-regulated learning alone, and their combined influence on writing skills of state junior high school students in South Tangerang. The objectives similarly target understanding these relationships to

provide a focused investigation on how anxiety and self-regulation affect writing performance. This approach helps identify specific areas where intervention can improve students' writing proficiency.

For teachers, the study offers insights into recognizing students' writing anxiety and encourages the use of targeted strategies such as goal setting, self-monitoring, and reflective writing to foster autonomy and reduce apprehension. Teachers can also improve instructional methods by incorporating differentiated instruction, scaffolding, and individualized feedback, thus creating a more supportive and effective learning environment that enhances writing skills.

Students benefit from understanding the effects of writing apprehension and the importance of self-regulated learning on their performance. Awareness of anxiety's impact and the use of self-regulation strategies enable students to develop confidence, manage their learning processes effectively, and improve writing quality. The study empowers students to become more independent, motivated learners, ultimately preparing them for future academic and professional challenges in English.

At the institutional level, this research informs schools and policymakers about the need for academic programs and policies that address psychological and cognitive barriers in writing. Schools can implement teacher training and curriculum development focused on reducing writing anxiety and promoting self-regulated learning. Policymakers can support these efforts by allocating resources for professional development and targeted interventions, thereby improving the overall quality of English education and preparing students for greater success.

Writing is a multifaceted and essential medium for expressing language, ideas, emotions, and opinions. Bitchener and Knoch (as cited in Prawiro & Kholisna, 2020) state that writing enables individuals to organize and communicate thoughts clearly to an audience. White (as cited in Shanorra et al., 2021) highlights writing as vital for sharing information, imparting knowledge, and narrating experiences. Similarly, Mantra and Widiastuti (2023) describe writing as structured communication aimed at conveying messages effectively, showing that writing is a crucial tool for expression and learning.

Descriptive writing skills refer to the ability to apply knowledge efficiently to produce coherent written texts. According to Merriam-Webster (1999), skill is the ability to perform tasks effectively, while Zahri (as cited in Nasihudin & Hariyadin, 2021) explains that skills involve a broad range of cognitive and practical activities. Richards and Schmidt (2010) consider writing a productive skill involving complex mental processes. Mantra and Widiastuti (2023) emphasize that writing demonstrates linguistic competence, and Arochman et al. (2024) note writing proficiency reveals a learner's understanding and unique style. Therefore, writing skills are fundamental for clear and meaningful communication.

Writing plays a significant role in education and personal development. Mantra et al. (2021) assert that writing helps students articulate thoughts and deepen cognitive understanding. Febriyanto et al. (2023) add that writing stimulates critical thinking, creativity, and courage to express unique perspectives. It also encourages the ability to gather and synthesize information effectively. Consequently, writing is foundational for communication, intellectual growth, and societal progress.

Despite its importance, writing poses many challenges. Ismayanti and Kholiq (2020) report that students find writing difficult due to vocabulary, spelling, punctuation, and grammar issues. Bryne (as cited in Kristiana et al., 2021) categorizes challenges into linguistic, psychological, and cognitive factors. Morgan (as cited in Ashrafiany et al., 2021) identifies confusion with thesis statements, audience awareness, and fear of failure. Cheng (as cited in Hudayani et al., 2020) highlights anxiety related to pedagogy, perceptions, self-assessment, and social factors. Budjalemba and Listyani (2020) emphasize obstacles such as low motivation, lack of practice, limited time, and unclear feedback.

Assessment of descriptive writing is critical to measure and enhance student skills. Brown (as cited in Sauhenda et al., 2024) lists goals of assessment including skill mastery, engagement, feedback, and achievement evaluation. Suryani and Mira (2024) underline the importance of teacher training in creating fair assessment tools. Nurgiyantoro (2016) and Sauhenda et al. (2024) describe various

assessment methods like portfolios and performance tasks. Rubrics often evaluate five components: content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2019; Heaton as cited in Suryani & Mira, 2024; Hartfield as cited in Nurgiyantoro, 2016). Proper assessment supports objective evaluation and fosters writing skill development.

Writing apprehension is a prevalent issue among students, especially those learning a foreign language. It refers to the anxiety and fear individuals experience when facing writing tasks, which can obstruct their ability to effectively express ideas. According to Khamkhien (2020), this apprehension arises from factors such as fear of negative evaluation, low confidence in writing skills, and prior negative writing experiences. Such anxiety often results in avoidance behaviors like procrastination, negatively impacting academic performance and language development.

The nature of writing apprehension encompasses both cognitive and emotional dimensions. Cognitively, it challenges processes like planning, organizing, and revising content, which become overwhelming for anxious students. Emotionally, it causes frustration, fear, and feelings of inadequacy that intensify writing difficulties (Khamkhien, 2020; Cheng et al., 2021). This creates a vicious cycle discouraging students from practicing and improving their writing, thus hindering academic success.

Understanding writing apprehension is essential due to its broad effects on individual outcomes and classroom interactions. Anxiety reduces motivation to engage in writing and collaborative activities such as peer review, which are crucial for writing skill development (Cheng et al., 2021). Educators can address this by providing constructive feedback, creating supportive classroom environments, and encouraging peer collaboration to enhance students' confidence and engagement (Khamkhien, 2020).

Several obstacles contribute to writing apprehension, including insufficient knowledge of English structure, negative attitudes towards writing, time constraints, and viewing writing as a solitary, intimidating task (Khamkhien, 2020). The absence of constructive feedback worsens anxiety by leaving students without guidance to improve (Cheng et al., 2021). Cultural expectations of perfectionism add further pressure, emphasizing the need for inclusive and supportive teaching approaches.

Assessment of writing apprehension reveals a complex interaction of factors. The perception of writing as difficult and the fear of failure foster avoidance behaviors (Cheng et al., 2021). Timely and constructive feedback plays a vital role in reducing anxiety by helping students identify strengths and areas for growth, thereby building confidence (Harris et al., 2022). Consequently, educators should foster an inclusive, supportive environment that acknowledges cultural influences and equips students with necessary resources to enhance their writing skills (Khamkhien, 2020).

Self-regulation is the ability of individuals to manage their own behaviors and emotional responses, both personally and socially. According to the Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary (1999), self-regulate means to regulate oneself or control something for oneself. Bandura (as cited in Braund & Timmons, 2021) describes self-regulation as the capacity to control one's behaviors and emotions, which is essential for navigating social situations and personal challenges. In educational contexts, self-regulated learning involves students managing their learning processes through planning, monitoring, and reflection, fostering autonomy and academic success (Gökteke & Ocak, 2024).

Self-regulated learning is defined as a proactive approach where learners set goals, apply effective strategies, and systematically assess their learning processes (Schunk, as cited in Bai et al., 2020). Zimmerman (as cited in Parveen et al., 2023) elaborates that it includes monitoring and adjusting learning strategies to achieve educational goals. Lim et al. (2023) and Mujiono (2024) emphasize that self-regulated learners actively manage their cognitive and motivational processes, taking full responsibility for their educational progress by continuously evaluating and modifying their methods.

The importance of self-regulated learning is highlighted through various models that describe it as a dynamic process involving planning, performance, and reflection phases. Zimmerman and Bandura (as cited in Prompan & Piamsai, 2024) explain that SRL integrates cognitive, metacognitive, motivational, social, and behavioral strategies. Darmiany (2012) details these phases as forethought (goal setting and motivation), performance (self-control and self-observation), and self-reflection (self-evaluation and reaction), illustrating a continuous cycle of improvement and adaptation in learning.

The significance of self-regulated learning also lies in its connection to intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy. L. Wang (2021) states that intrinsic motivation improves learners' attitudes toward learning, while perseverance and belief in one's ability enhance the use of SRL strategies. Trilling (as cited in Bai & Wang, 2023) further notes that SRL is a crucial 21st-century competence, supporting lifelong learning and adaptability. Thus, self-regulation not only boosts academic achievement but also cultivates essential life skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and adaptability.

Research on writing apprehension reveals a negative relationship between writing anxiety and the use of self-regulated learning strategies. Khamkhien (2020) found that students with lower writing apprehension are more likely to employ SRL strategies such as goal-setting and self-monitoring, leading to better writing performance. Similarly, Cheng et al. (2021) and Lim et al. (2023) emphasize the need to reduce writing anxiety to foster SRL behaviors, while Zhang and Wang's (2022) meta-analysis supports integrating SRL interventions to manage anxiety and improve writing skills. This body of research underscores the importance of addressing writing apprehension alongside promoting self-regulation in writing instruction.

Although numerous studies have investigated the role of feedback and SRL in enhancing students' writing skills, there remains a notable gap in understanding the specific interplay between writing apprehension and self-regulated learning, particularly at the junior high school level. Existing research has primarily focused on higher education contexts, leaving limited exploration in secondary education, especially among EFL learners in Indonesia. To address this gap, the present study investigates the effects of writing apprehension and self-regulated learning on students' writing skills in junior high schools in South Tangerang. The study is guided by the following research questions:

1. Are there any effects of writing apprehension combined with self-regulated learning on the writing skills of junior high school students in South Tangerang?
2. Is there any effect of writing apprehension on the writing skills of junior high school students in South Tangerang?
3. Is there any effect of self-regulated learning on the writing skills of junior high school students in South Tangerang?

RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a quantitative method to examine the relationships between writing apprehension (X1), students' self-regulated learning (X2), and their writing skills (Y). Quantitative research involves collecting numerical data and analyzing it statistically to test hypotheses. This approach fits well with the aim of this research because it allows measuring the variables clearly and testing how they influence one another. The method applied in this research is a survey. Survey research collects data through questionnaires or interviews to understand the opinions, behaviors, or characteristics of a group of people. This study uses this method to gather data from students and analyze the connections between the variables naturally, without manipulating them.

The research process started by identifying the problem through reading previous studies and observing the context to find gaps that need exploration. After that, hypotheses were developed to predict how writing apprehension and self-regulated learning might affect writing skills. Then, the researcher chose the quantitative survey method because it best suits the study's goals and the nature of the variables. The variables were defined clearly, and data sources were determined. Primary data

were collected directly through questionnaires and writing tests, while secondary data were taken from related reports and documents.

Before the main data collection, the instruments were tested on a small group to make sure they are valid and reliable. The data collected was then analyzed statistically to check the relationships and test the hypotheses. This study used a quantitative method to examine the relationships between writing apprehension (X1), students' self-regulated learning (X2), and their writing skills (Y). Quantitative research involves collecting numerical data and analyzing it statistically to test hypotheses. This approach fits well with the aim of this research because it allows measuring the variables clearly and testing how they influence one another.

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that both writing apprehension (X1) and self-regulated learning (X2) significantly influence students' English descriptive writing skills (Y). The multiple correlation coefficient ($R = 0.607$) and coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.668$) indicate that 68.8% of the variance in writing skills is explained by these two variables, while the remaining 31.2% is attributable to other factors. The regression model, $Y = 46.461 - 0.164X1 + 0.221X2$, further highlights the predictive strength of writing apprehension and self-regulated learning. Hypothesis testing confirmed that writing apprehension exerts a negative but significant effect (Sig = 0.029, $t = -2.218$), whereas self-regulated learning has a positive and significant effect (Sig = 0.034, $t = 2.158$). Additionally, the joint effect of both variables was found to be highly significant (Sig = 0.000, $F = 96.161$), underscoring their combined role in shaping students' writing outcomes.

These results suggest that lowering students' writing apprehension while fostering their capacity for self-regulated learning can substantially improve their ability to produce coherent and effective descriptive texts in English. The findings reinforce previous research that highlights the complementary importance of affective and cognitive factors in second language writing development. Nonetheless, the scope of this study was limited to private Islamic junior high schools in South Tangerang, which restricts the generalizability of the results. Future research is therefore recommended to examine these relationships across broader educational contexts and diverse student populations to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing EFL writing proficiency.

Table 1

Recapitulation of the Results of the Linearity Test of the Regression Line Relationship between X2 Variable and Y Variable

ANOVA Table

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Descriptive Text Writing Skill * Self-Regulated Learning	Between Groups	(Combined)	686.212	23	29.835	.732	.796
		Linearity	12.414	1	12.414	.304	.583
		Deviation from Linearity	673.798	22	30.627	.751	.770
Within Groups			2691.388	66	40.779		
Total			3377.600	89			

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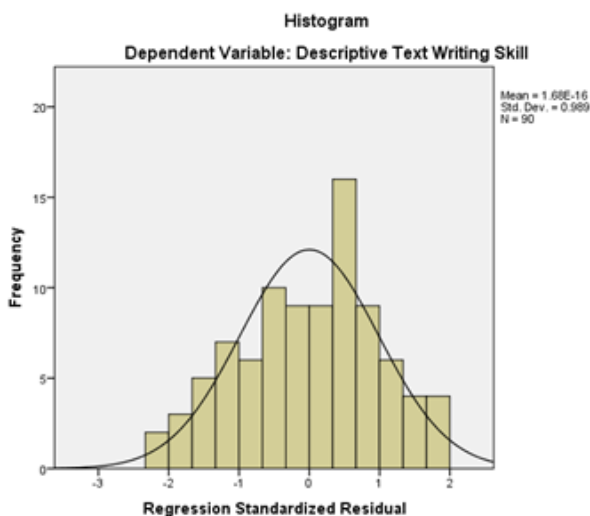


Figure 1
Histogram of Normality Standard Deviation

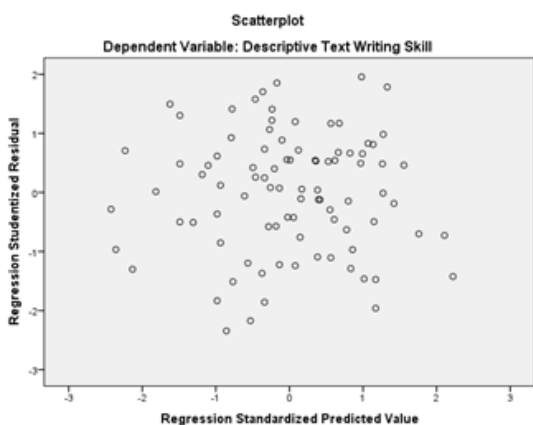


Figure 2
Histogram of Heteroscedasticity Test

CONCLUSIONS

This study reveals significant findings on the impact of writing apprehension and self-regulated learning on the English descriptive text writing skills of Private Islamic Junior High School students in South Tangerang. The combined influence of writing apprehension and self-regulated learning on students' writing proficiency was found to be statistically significant, as indicated by the value of $\text{Sig} = 0.000 < 0.05$ and $F \text{ count} = 96.161$. This suggests that both variables together play a crucial role in shaping students' ability to write effectively in English descriptive texts.

The analysis showed that writing apprehension alone has a notable effect on writing proficiency. The significance value of $\text{Sig} = 0.029 < 0.05$ and $t \text{ count} = -2.218$ confirms that higher levels of writing apprehension are associated with lower writing skills. This finding highlights the importance of addressing students' fears and anxieties related to writing, which can hinder their performance and overall progress in mastering English writing.

Self-regulated learning was found to have a significant positive effect on writing skills, supported by the value of $\text{Sig} = 0.034 < 0.05$ and $t \text{ count} = 2.158$. This emphasizes the need for students to develop autonomy in their learning processes, including goal setting, self-monitoring, and strategy use. Encouraging self-regulated learning can empower students to take control of their writing development and improve their competence in English descriptive text writing.

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