

# Online Writing Instruction in Indonesia: Causes of Anxiety Problems and Strategies of Solutions

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## ABSTRACT

Online learning brings EFL students the new experience of writing instruction. On the one hand, the new experience in online learning may lead to excitement; on the other hand, it may also result in problems such as anxiety. The current study aims at tracing the students' writing anxiety levels, identified the causes of anxiety problems, and put forward strategies of solutions. The results of the data analyses show that out of 149 students involved in this study, 115 students had a high level of writing anxiety and the other 35 students were of medium and low levels of anxiety. The results of the study also indicated that anxiety problems were predominantly caused by time constraints (3.92), linguistic factors (3.70), and feeling afraid of negative evaluation from peers and the teacher (3.63). Furthermore, students also reported conditions that made their writing skills stagnant, for instance, limited writing practice (3.57), insufficient writing technique (3.57), and shortage of feedback (2.81). The qualitative data revealed that numerous strategies implemented by highly anxious students to reduce their writing anxiety in online writing instruction include doing more linguistics activities, doing self-anxiety treatment, implementing writing techniques, building resources, and increasing their self-confidence. Understanding the numerous causes of anxiety, further research may investigate teachers' strategies to help students reduce their anxiety.

Keywords: online writing instruction, writing anxiety, high anxious students, problems, solutions

## INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 outbreak has rapidly caused the world to control or lockdown a variety of activities, including educational activities, resulting in significant emergencies transfer of universities into online learning. The use of the internet and other significant technologies to produce resources for academic reasons, instruction, and program administration is known as online learning (Fry, 2001). In Indonesia, this international crisis has also affected the language classroom instruction, in this case, writing class. As a result, different kinds of online platforms are used. The online platforms which are commonly used in online writing instruction are Zoom, Google Classroom, and the learning management system (LMS). Furthermore, some researchers have investigated the use of Flip classroom (Wu et al., 2020), Edmodo (Yavuz et al., 2020) for online writing instruction, and screencasts (Cheng & Li, 2020; Cunningham & Link, 2021; Yiğit & Seferoğlu, 2021; Hizriana, Rufaidhab, Norc & Handrianto, 2022) to provide feedback, Google Docs (Neumann & Kopcha, 2019) for collaborative work, technology-based Automated Writing Evaluation (AWE) namely *Write & Improve* (WI) (Karpova, 2020) to improve writing performance and Pigai (Tian & Zhou, 2020) to assess students' writing.

Most EFL students regard writing as a difficult activity due to its complexity and limited vocabulary and lack of grammatical mastery. During the school shut down, writing activity even becomes more challenging when teachers shift to online learning or emergency remote teaching.

Not all students have equal access to the materials due to some problems such as low motivation, lack of interest, limited internet connections, and other distracting problems. Sabti et al. (2019) explained that ESL and EFL writers have writing difficulties owing to a lack of English language competency, whereas L1 writers can write quickly and effortlessly since they have immediate access to the language's nuances. In addition, students fall short of their teachers' communicative and linguistic expectations from their writing (Jabali, 2018). Furthermore, students' backgrounds, personality types, learning styles, language competence and experience, perception, attitude, and beliefs about writing are some crucial factors to be taken into account.

Despite its complexities, writing is an essential productive skill that might be used in mastering other skills, such as

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speaking, writing, and listening (Zhu, 2004). The difficulty of writing as a skill to acquire may increase EFL students' anxiety and demotivate them to put out the effort necessary to complete a particular writing job, resulting in poor performance (Erkan & Saban, 2011). Consequently, when students face difficulties to write, their self-efficacy, self-confidence, and motivation may also be low and this affects the language learning process and writing performance. Such problems have been ascribed to the lack of exercise and experiences in writing in English (Erkan & Saban, 2011). Furthermore, those negative conditions might lead to anxiety as has been researched by scholars in this area. They found that anxiety has a negative correlation with students' performance (Gibriel, 2019; Latif, 2015; Zhang, 2011). Concerning the levels of anxiety, researchers have reported that students experienced a high level of writing anxiety when they are assigned to write English compositions.

Besides the complexity of writing which becomes the source of students' negative attitude toward writing, other problems contribute to students' writing anxiety such as lack of ideas, lack of linguistics ability, limited time, negative comments from the teachers, and inadequate writing activities (Hartono & Maharani, 2020; Sabti et al., 2019; Zhang (2011). Previous studies have investigated the effect on writing performance and found that high anxious students have low scores compared to student with low anxiety levels (Challob, et. al, 2016; Genç & Yaylı, 2019; Gibriel, 2019;). Understanding the detrimental effect of writing anxiety on the student's performance, the students learn to manage this negative feeling to overcome their anxiety. Gibriel (2019) scrutinized different strategies used by high and low-performing students. High-performing students spend more time on the preparation stage compared to low-performing students. Wu (2011) reported that peer review strategies help students reduce their writing anxiety since peer review allows students to discuss, give feedback, create a conducive learning environment, increase writing interest, and lower pressure and anxiety. In addition, students also utilize some strategies, such as rhetorical, cognitive, and socio-affective strategies to alleviate their anxiety (Loppies, 2020).

### Online Writing Class

Teaching writing needs comprehensive preparation to successfully deliver the theory and make the students practice writing correctly. As students will likely find difficulties in writing, such as selecting appropriate vocabulary, using correct grammar, using correct writing mechanics, and creating coherence and unity essays (Brown, 2001). During the covid-19 pandemic, students have to adjust to the new way of delivery through several learning platforms such as Flip classroom (Wu et al., 2020), Edmodo (Yavuz et al., 2020), automated feedback application (Cheng & Li, 2020; Cunningham & Link, 2021; Yiğit & Seferoğlu, 2021) and google docs (Neumann & Kopcha, 2019), Automated Writing Evaluation (AWE) (Karpova, 2020;

Tian & Zhou, 2020). Those applications are used to track students writing, and writing progress, facilitate collaborative work, and asses students' writing product.

In the online classroom, students are expected to be able to produce a piece of writing even though they have limited interaction with teachers. Normally, teachers will have two ways of writing delivery such as synchronous via zoom meeting and google meet application and asynchronous learning via google classroom and other learning management systems. In teaching writing, teachers followed the Writing Process Approach which consists of several stages, such as pre-writing, during writing, and post-writing (Brown, 2001; Nunan, 2001). Understanding students' attitudes towards online delivery, a current study conducted by Zhaghlool (2020) indicated that teaching online writing through CALL was perceived positively by students since it is beneficial, fun, and motivating. Furthermore, it also enhances students' self-confidence and builds autonomous learning.

### Writing Anxiety

Daly and Miller (1975) introduced the term writing anxiety to refer to a negative emotional state towards writing and the act of avoiding writing activities. Horwitz et al (1986) explained that anxiety is related to the mental state which is manifested through stress, tension, emotion, nervousness, and worry. Other scholars described writing anxiety occurs due to students' worries about negative comments or evaluations of their writing (Daly & Miller, 1975; Hassan, 2001). Furthermore, anxiety contributes to students' performance (Horwitz, 2001). Investigation of the area of foreign language anxiety becomes important in language learning because emotions determine students' success in learning (Dewalee et al, 2019). Furthermore, there has been significant movement in the research focus from the dominance of cognitive to affective aspects (Chuang, 2019).

Research on writing anxiety shared similar findings that anxiety has a negative correlation with the student's performance in which low anxious students produce better composition compared to high anxious students' counterparts (Erkan & Saban, 2011, Gibriel, 2019; Latif, 2015; Zhang, 2011). Furthermore, research also showed that students experienced three types of writing anxiety when they write English compositions, namely somatic anxiety, cognitive anxiety, and avoidance behavior (Cheng, 2002; Jennifer & Ponniah, 2017; Zhang, 2011). Somatic anxiety refers to emotional changes as a result of students' negative attitudes towards writing, such as trembling, heart beating fast, and sweaty. Cognitive anxiety is related to changes in mental aspects, such as worry, nervousness, and fear of negative evaluation from others on their writing product. Meanwhile, avoidance behavior can be observed through the act of avoiding writing activities (Cheng, 2004).

### Causes of Writing Anxiety

As explained earlier that anxiety is likely to happen in writing activities, students are required to get much exposure to writing practice. The writing complexities also contribute to writing difficulties. Some previous studies have investigated the causes of writing anxiety. They found that low self-confidence, negative feedback from teachers and peers, insufficient and ineffective feedback, and limited writing practice are some of the sources of anxiety (Cheng, 2002; Jennifer & Ponniah, 2017; Kusumaningputri, Ningsih, & Wisasongko, 2018; Wahyuni, Oktavia, & Marlina, 2019; & Zhang, 2011). Another study also figured out some additional sources of anxiety such as low English competence and feeling afraid of being criticized by others (Abdel Latif, 2007).

Horwitz (2017) has pointed out that personal and interpersonal factors may be more influential than other factors. Concerning internal factors, anxiety is influenced by students' low self-esteem (Abdel Latif, 2007; Jin et al., 2015), low self-confidence in using linguistic knowledge (Clement et al, 1994) being a perfectionist, and having a negative perception of oneself, other people, and future (Dewaele, 2017). Meanwhile, the learning environment is considered the external factor which may influence students' anxiety. Effiong (2016) found that classroom situations, teachers' and peers' personalities provoked students' anxiety in the classroom. Furthermore, the teaching method is found to be an important factor affecting students' emotional state (De Smet et al, 2018; Zhang 2011). Furthermore, the result of the literature review analysis indicated learners' beliefs, students' and teachers' rapport, learning instruction, and test conditions also trigger students' anxiety.

### Solution of Strategies to Reduce Anxiety

As explained above anxiety is also stemmed from students' internal factors. It is required for students to be able to manage and control their negative emotions to perform better in writing. Some studies have investigated students' strategies to alleviate their anxiety. Wu (2011) found that students are benefited from peer review activity since it gives opportunities for students to have a discussion, to give and receive comments from each other, feel comfortable and be motivated, and avoid stress. In addition, students also utilize some strategies, such as cognitive (enriching vocabulary, highlighting important information, practicing paraphrasing and summarizing, and note-taking) to alleviate their anxiety (Pineda, 2010), rhetorical (finding more compositions models and comparing them), socio-affective strategies (setting up positive feeling, perception, and motivation towards writing and building interaction with others) to alleviate their anxiety and socio-affective strategies (setting up positive feeling, perception, and motivation towards writing and building interaction

with others) (Loppies, 2020; Mu, 2005). The previous finding supports Hyland's (2003) opinion that writing peer-review help students to cope with students anxiety since it allows students to share their ideas, knowledge, and emotions in a comfortable situation.

The implementation of online writing instruction raises some questions about students' emotions and how to cope with any writing difficulties since learning is an integration of both emotional and intellectual processes. However, the literature and research studies addressing writing anxiety in the online setting are not abundant yet. Whereas, it is predicted that students experience anxiety to some extent; therefore, the current study investigates the conditions when anxiety happens by focusing on undergraduate EFL high-anxious students. Furthermore, a comprehensive analysis of how high anxious students finally have completed the writing task is interesting to discuss and examine. Therefore, the findings of this study also portray students' strategies to cope with their anxiety during online writing instruction.

Reflecting upon the background, the current study has three research questions:

1. How are Indonesian university students distributed in terms of their writing anxiety levels?
2. What are the causes of writing anxiety experienced by highly anxious students?
3. What are the writing-anxiety-reducing strategies implemented by highly anxious students?

## METHOD

### Participants

The participants of this study were undergraduate EFL students from five universities in Indonesia who participated in this mixed-method study. They were students who are willing to give respond and participate in this study. Furthermore, they have taken two levels of writing courses, namely paragraph and essay writing courses in their study. They were from the first and second years of study. There were 151 students involved as participants and 115 of them were categorized as highly anxious students. Meanwhile, 31 students were in moderate anxiety levels and 5 students were in low anxiety levels. The participants were recruited through communication with the writing teachers, and the teachers were asked to send the link of the questionnaire to relevant students. The students' responses given by filling out and submitting the online questionnaire to the researchers indicated their agreement to participate in this research.

### Data Collection Tools

Since this study focuses on investigating high anxious students, the first instrument namely Second Language Writing Anxiety Scale (SLWAI) developed by Cheng (2004)

was employed to categorize the students' levels of writing anxiety: low, moderate, and high levels anxiety. To answer the second research question about the causes of writing anxiety, data were collected through Writing Anxiety Cause Questionnaire (WACQ) developed by Rezaei and Jafari (2014). The two questionnaires above used a 5-Likert scale with the options varying from Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Neutral (3), Disagree (2), to Strongly Disagree (1). Regarding the third research question about the students' strategies to overcome their writing anxiety, the data was obtained through students' reflective journals. The students were asked to describe in which situation they feel anxious and what strategies they used to overcome their problems. So, the students responded to the questionnaires consisting of qualitative and quantitative questions. In this study, only responses from 115 students with a high level of writing anxiety were analyzed.

### Data Analysis

To analyze the obtained data, the quantitative data obtained were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Further analysis was done to figure out the level of anxiety using measurement of average scores,  $M < 55$  (low),  $M = 55 - 65$  (moderate), and  $M > 65$  (high). The second quantitative obtained from the questionnaire on causes of anxiety was analyzed and presented in the form of a percentage and mean score. Meanwhile, the data obtained from students' reflective journals were analyzed thematically to obtain a comprehensive response.

## FINDINGS

### Frequency of Distribution of Students' Writing Anxiety Levels

Analysis of data obtained from SLWAI showed that students experienced various levels of writing anxiety as indicated in Table 1.

Table 1 shows that 115 students were at a high anxiety level, 31 students were at a moderate level, and 5 students were at a low anxiety level during online writing class. In other words, it can be said that the majority of the students (76.2%) experienced high anxiety when they are assigned to write English compositions. Meanwhile, 20% of the respondents have moderate and 3.3% of students have low anxiety levels. In this study, the responses from highly anxious students, in particular, were considered for further analysis.

### The Causes of Writing Anxiety Experienced by High Anxious Students

Analysis of data gained by using the WACQ revealed that there are numerous causes of students' writing anxiety in online writing instruction as indicated in the statements in the questionnaire items. The mean of each of the seven statements in the questionnaire is shown in Table 2.

As shown in Table 2, the causes of writing anxiety most frequently experienced by the students include time constraints (3.92), linguistic difficulties (3.70), feeling afraid of negative evaluation from the teacher and fellow friends (3.63) as well as

**Table 1:** Writing Anxiety distribution

	<i>No. of participants</i>	<i>% of the total participants</i>	<i>Minimum level score</i>	<i>Maximum level score</i>	<i>Mean of anxiety level</i>
High	115	76.2%	66	94	81.7
Moderate	31	20.5%	52	65	60.7
Low	5	3.3%	41	49	46
Total	151	100%	41	94	70.2

**Table 2:** Causes of writing anxiety

<i>No</i>	<i>Statements</i>	<i>Mean</i>
1	While writing English compositions, I often encounter some linguistic difficulties, such as inadequate mastery of vocabulary, simple sentence structures, and grammatical structures.	3.70
2	I usually have no idea about the topic and what to write, in particular when I write English compositions under a time constraint.	3.92
3	I'm afraid of negative evaluation of my English compositions from my teacher and fellow students.	3.63
4	My English writing skill stands still which makes me feel upset.	3.57
5	I don't think I have a good command of composition techniques. For instance, I'm too much concerned about the forms and formats	3.49
6	I lack writing practice inside and outside the classroom.	3.57
7	I don't think the teacher's feedback on my English writing is sufficient and effective.	2.81

both stagnant English skills and lack of writing practice (3.57). The other two causes of writing anxiety include poor command of composition technique (3.49) and limited feedback from the teacher (2.81). The tendency of the participants' responses toward favorable (strongly agree and agree) and unfavorable (disagree and strongly disagree) is shown in Table 3.

Table 3 shows that about three-fifths of students (61%) felt anxious because they lacked linguistic competencies in that they had inadequate mastery of vocabulary and problems in simple sentence structures and grammatical rules. In addition, about one-third of students (67%) experienced anxiety when they were assigned to write compositions in a limited time. The data also show that almost three-fifths of students (59%) felt anxious in writing because they were afraid of negative comments from teachers and peers. Furthermore, almost half of the students felt anxious due to their worries about their ability (49%) and lack of composition techniques (47%). Moreover, three-fifths students (60%) lacked writing practice both inside and outside the class. Finally, almost two-fifth of students (38%) felt that the feedback from the teachers for their writing was insufficient.

In this section, the results from the students' reflective journals were analyzed qualitatively. The questions in this section are quite similar to the questions in the previous section about causes of writing anxiety. It is done to triangulate the students' responses to the closed-ended questions. Students were requested to explain in what situation they feel anxious. The students' responses support the data obtained from seven questions, their responses are as follows: The students feel nervous when they have to write English text due to some problems such as lack of English grammar knowledge, lack of vocabulary mastery, and other linguistic factors as can be observed in one sample excerpt below:

*When I write English compositions, I often encounter some linguistic difficulties, such as inadequate mastery of vocabulary, simple sentence structures, and grammatical errors (DLRW)*

Respondents also feel tension when they have to produce a piece of writing on a given topic in a limited time. It can be seen from the following:

*I feel anxious because I keep asking myself whether I can do well and I am not used to writing under time pressure, I prefer to write freely what I want to write without any time rules and themes. And my English is very very bad... sometimes when my very bad mental state comes back it also makes it a little more difficult for me to recover from my depression. (AFA)*

Another response also showed that students need enough time for preparation to generate ideas before they start doing any English activities. Writing in a limited time even makes them more nervous and cannot think properly due to their worries of not being able to finish the assignment on time.

*Because, at first, I usually feel anxiety when writing in constraint time. Besides, I am difficult for doing sudden activities such as writing, speaking, and others. So, I need time for preparation (exploring the ideas). (GPA)*

*The first problem is of course because English is not my everyday language, so I don't know a lot of vocabulary. The second problem is grammar is quite complicated for me. Especially when I am under time pressure. It will make me even more stressed and difficult to think. (GADR)*

In addition, students also describe the situation that influences their negative emotions in writing class from external factors, such as teachers and peers. Anxiety occurs when their works are evaluated by others. Negative comments from teachers and peers become one of the sources of writing anxiety.

*I am afraid my English is broken. Then, my lecturer gives me bad feedback and my friends deride my English. This is not for writing but speaking too, I feel it. (CSS)*

*I am scared of people's judgment. I feel my writing skills are just not good as my other friends. Sometimes, I hate the fact that I am thinking about the possibility of my writing may get judged/bullied by others. (NTH)*

*One will see my work and have their thought about it. Ashamed of me as an English department student, my writing skill stands still. And quite a nightmare if the lecturer or teacher put on a comment with 'tension'. (SJ)*

**Table 3:** The tendency of the favorable and unfavorable responses (N = 115)

Statement No	Favorable responses		Neutral		Unfavorable Responses	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	70	61	33	29	12	10
2	77	67	32	28	7	5
3	68	59	32	28	15	13
4	56	45	46	49	13	11
5	54	47	48	44	14	9
6	69	60	44	38	2	2
7	44	38	43	37	28	25

Those are some of the students' feelings when they are allowed to express their emotions in writing English compositions. It can be said that students' anxiety experience numerous factors which become the sources of writing anxiety.

### The Writing-Anxiety Reducing Strategies Implemented by Highly Anxious Students

This section reports the students with high anxiety levels tried to overcome their negative emotions in a writing activity. As mentioned earlier in the method part, the data obtained from the students' reflective journal were analyzed, coded, and classified under similar categories and presented using percentages. The results of the thematic analysis can be seen in Figure 1.

Figure 1 indicates six strategies implemented by high anxious students to lower their writing anxiety. One of the causes of writing anxiety is a lack of knowledge of writing techniques, the participants have implemented process writing (16%) from the early step of the writing activity, starting from doing clustering and brainstorming in the prewriting activities, they also discussed ideas with classmates. In the writing stage, they responded that they write their composition following the outline which have been prepared earlier. In the post-writing stage, they did self-editing and also shared their work with their classmates for feedback. To support the findings that students have implemented writing techniques in the writing process, students responded that they conducted peer-review strategies to get feedback and comment on their work.

*I will keep trying to write until it's finished, when I'm done, I'll ask my friends to read it and give me feedback, and with that, I know how my writing is. (KH)*

*I will think of an outline of what I should write ahead of time and think about how to make my writing acceptable to my lecturers. (AKA)*

They seek support from their friends and family to read and comment on their drafts and make revisions based on their suggestion. The support means a lot to them to lower their

anxiety and stand confidently to finish their work as can be observed below:

*I usually have my cousins proofread my compositions and have their feedback to help me. In general, I face a great deal of anxiety not just from writing, my worst anxiety comes from social anxiety, so discussing and talking to people such as my classmates and teachers, gives me a great deal of anxiety to some point (if there are any) getting triggered to an anxiety attack.*

The second strategy is improving linguistic competence (20%) such as practicing grammar exercises, watching movies/English videos for vocabulary improvement, and memorizing English vocabulary. To visualize the implemented strategies, the sample of students' responses is given below. As the main cause of writing anxiety is linguistic difficulties, the students improve their linguistics competencies by doing several activities as said in the excerpt below:

*My strategy is to learn more and increase my vocabulary in English. In addition, I will learn more about grammar and writing properly and correctly. Besides that, I also read a lot and look for references to make it easier to get ideas in writing. So that it can produce good and correct writing following linguistic rules and in it contains many new ideas. (ENF)*

*I always start writing in English. After that, I will re-check whether the grammar, I use is right or wrong, then corrected it again by asking other people or checking individually through Grammarly. By asking other people, I managed to reduce my anxiety over whether the written text was easy to understand or not. Checking on Grammarly also helped me a little so that the writing looks neat, although I'm not sure myself because of the machine. (WHO?)*

The third most common strategy (18%) is being positive, such as being calm, taking a deep breath, and keeping motivated. Since anxiety deals with personal emotion, the students manage their anxiety by doing several things as can be observed in the following response:

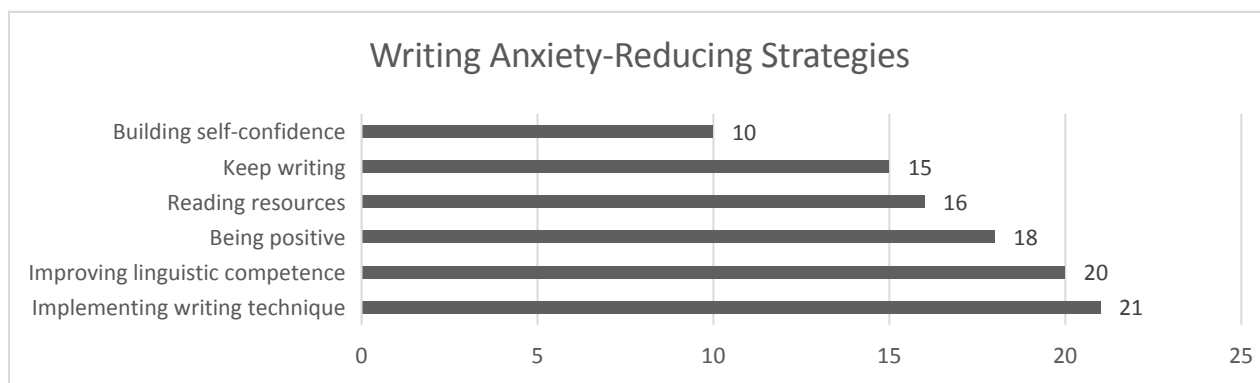


Fig. 1: Writing anxiety-reducing strategies

*Of course, the first thing I did was I took a deep breath to calm myself down. Once I've calmed down enough, I try to come up with ideas for writing and do the best I can. (GPA)*

*My strategy is always to pray and do the best I can. Whatever the result, I have tried my best. While the anxiety is still there, I will strive to fight back and think positively and always be confident. (FEO)*

The third strategy is reading resources (16%). There are numerous ways to deepen their understanding of the materials, such as reading more available sources on the internet about the concept and the example of certain essays. The materials obtained in the classroom need to be supported with supplementary materials so that the materials will be easily understood. Since in online learning, students have limited time to have direct interaction with the teacher to clarify the unclear point. One sample response can be read below:

*It is better before writing, the lecturer explains the material in advance, what is the structure, and understands with students together. If some students do not understand, they can ask questions. After all, students understand better about the task. (SIA)*

*I usually look for sources of several examples of how to write English compositions well, sometimes I also ask my friends to discuss them because sharing their opinions and knowledge will make it easier so that the feelings of anxiety or confusion that I felt before were reduced (TRR).*

The next strategy is keep writing which was conducted by 15% of the participants. One of the causes of writing anxiety is a lack of writing practice inside and outside the class. The students did a lot of writing practice by observing many examples from the internet of different types of essays to be familiar with different essay organizations.

*I will try to learn new things that I have never tried and hone my writing skills by continuing to practice. (VAR)*

Building self-confidence was done by 10% of the participants. The only way to complete their essay is by being confident. One of the strategies used by students in building self-confidence is that making mistakes is a normal thing and this situation makes them more motivated to perform better in writing.

*Confident, I believe that even though what I write is still not perfect and needs a lot of corrections but I have done my best and it is indeed a learning process that I must continue to develop and improve. (ILK)*

*More self-motivated and trying to do the best and learn to ignore the ridicule of others, and try to improve from good criticism/suggestions from lecturers or friends. (CSS)*

One surprising fact is that some students write their draft in their native language, Bahasa Indonesia, then they translate their composition into English. They think that it

is easier to write in their native language, and it can reduce their anxiety.

*Usually, I will determine the topic that I will write about, then write it in Indonesian first. After that, I will start writing it in English. (LNB)*

*Sometimes I write it first in Indonesian and then translate it into English. (RSD)*

## DISCUSSION

This study has examined the causes of students' anxiety during writing activities amidst the Covid-19 pandemic. More to that, some strategies have been figured out on how students alleviate their anxiety. This study exemplified how students with a high level of writing anxiety can finally complete their written work. The results of this study showed that most Indonesian EFL students (76.2%) were at a high level of writing anxiety in online writing instruction. The findings confirmed some studies conducted in offline settings (Cheng, 2002; Jennifer & Ponniah, 2017; Erkan & Saban, 2011, Gibriel, 2019; Zhang, 2011). A recent conducted in the online setting have also figured out that the majority of Filipino students have a high level of writing anxiety (Kabigting et al., 2020) foremost type; then, the learners' writing ability. Thirty-three grade 10 ESL learners participated in. The utilization of Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI). It is also in line with the findings on the study carried out by Quvanch et. al (2022) in different context that students experienced moderate levels of anxiety. The writing activity itself is challenging and this condition might lead to negative feelings during online learning. Moreover, students are expected to be autonomous learners, responsible, disciplined, and motivated to be successful in online learning (Russell & Murphy-Judy, 2020). The findings from the first research questions indicates that students' experience anxiety in any context of learning, offline and online setting.

The findings for the second research questions showed that the students' negative feelings on anxiety are due to some factors, such as difficulties in generating ideas under limited time, linguistics problems, afraid of negative evaluation, constant writing ability, lack of sufficient writing techniques, and writing practice, and lack effective feedback from teachers. The findings of this study are in line with Sabti (2013) which was done in Iraq. Her findings indicated they Iraqi students get limited exposure to English usage, especially for writing. It is found that they have low writing competencies as also experienced by students in this context. Another set of articles revealed that the main cause of writing anxiety was limited time, negative comments of the teachers, and inadequate writing activities (Hartono & Maharani, 2020; Kırmızı & Kırmızı, 2015; Sabti et al., 2019; Syarifudin, 2020).

Most of the studies mentioned above came to an agreement that the main cause of writing anxiety is writing

in a limited time. With the students' negative emotional state on writing activity, it is challenging for students to produce a good piece of writing. The second main problem is stemmed from linguistics problems. It is supported by Hartono & Maharani (2020) that 92% of the respondents reported that grammatical problems and vocabulary make the students more anxious and worried. From this fact, it can be argued that teachers should find ways to introduce English grammar and make the students understand how to use grammar correctly for writing. Apprehension About Grammar is found to have a negatively significant correlation with writing performance (Sanders-Reio et al., 2014). Consequently, this situation decreases students' motivation, writing self-efficacy and contributes to writing anxiety. The negative comments, time constraints, and limited writing practice contribute to students writing self-efficacy and motivation. In addition, students with high levels of writing anxiety fear being critiqued (Abdel Latif, 2015; Sabti et al., 2019). Inadequate writing practice makes them difficult to compose writing because they are not trained to think creatively and to produce logical sentences (Cheng, 2004)

The second research findings revealed some writing strategies implemented by the students to manage their anxiety. The strategies include implementing writing techniques, improving linguistic competence, being positive, building resources, keep writing, and building self-confidence. To ease the writing activity, teachers have implemented the writing process, pre-writing, during writing, and post-writing. The overall activities in the writing process are found to be an effective strategy to help the students find ideas, write better, and gain feedback from teachers and peers which can create a comfortable situation (Bayat, 2014; Gibriel, 2019; Wu, 2011). According to Qashoa (2014), affective strategies help to manage their stress by building confidence and changing their mindset that they can finish the assignment and never be afraid of making errors and by believing that writing is a process. This strategy helps them to create positive behavior towards writing and increase their self-efficacy, by making difficult things becomes easy.

As said by Bandura (1989) and Pajares and Valiante (1997) that students who have high self-efficacy will likely be less apprehensive and they have to ability to manage and handle situations that make them more anxious than the students with low self-efficacy. This is because "people with low self-efficacy may believe that things are more difficult than they really are—a belief that can foster anxiety and stress and leave few choices for how to solve problems" (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2016). Therefore, it is important to note that teachers should be able to enhance students' self-efficacy by creating a non-threatening classroom. This study suggests that these factors need to be taken into consideration in EFL writing instruction to facilitate the teaching and learning

process of EFL writing, which in turn would help enhance the EFL undergraduates' writing ability. Further analysis was done by Sabti et al., (2019) and they found that self-efficacy and motivation are positively correlated; however, writing anxiety was the only aspect that is negatively correlated with self-efficacy and motivation. From these findings, it can be assumed that writing anxiety should be seen as a state of emotion that is influenced by other factors, such as self-efficacy, internal factors (feeling afraid of getting poor grade, concerned about others' comments, and motivation). Enjoyable classroom will facilitate learning and gradually enhance students' motivation. In term of reducing anxiety level, teachers have two alternative ways either focusing on managing situations that caused anxiety or creating a non-threatening classroom (Horwitz et al., 1986).

It is expected that teachers are willing to consider the findings of this study by focusing on students' strategies such as implementing writing technique, improving linguistics competence, being positive, reading resources, keep practicing, and building self-confidence. By incorporating those strategies, students and teachers work together to solve problem and make the learning more meaningful. Consequently, students' anxiety decreases, meanwhile the students' writing skill increases.

## CONCLUSION

The findings of the study give clear pictures of the situations which lead to students' negative behavior in writing. The main causes of anxiety are grammatical and vocabulary problems, lack of topical knowledge, having no idea what to write, as well as fear of negative comments from peers and teachers. On one side, students are expected to utilize some strategies to help them write better such as implementing writing techniques, improving linguistic competence, being positive, reading resources, keep writing, and building self-confidence. Research on the role of emotion is still dominant due to its significant contribution to language learning success. Students involve their feeling and emotions when learning a language.

## SUGGESTION

There is room for further research, such as investigating how teachers help students feel comfortable in the learning by creating motivated and interesting classrooms to enhance students; writing ability. Since this study does not include writing performance, further study can provide a closer look at how anxiety affects students' performance and their strategies.

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