Higher Students' Anxiety Level and Factor in Writing Essays through Google Docs

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to investigate the level and factors of anxiety experienced by higher students while writing essays through Google Docs. It used a quantitative data collection method collected through questionnaires adapted from the Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) by Cheng and ESL Writing Anxiety by Zhang using Five-Point Likert Scale. There were 10 participants in this study selected by using convenience sampling. The results showed an average anxiety score of 63, indicating moderate anxiety levels. The study identified that a lack of sufficient writing practice was students' primary cause of anxiety. Overall, this study provides valuable insights into the factors contributing to students' anxiety levels while writing essays through Google Docs. It can inform educators' strategies to support students in their writing assignments.

***Keywords**: Essay, Google Docs, ICT, SLAWAI, Writing Anxiety*

INTRODUCTION

Technology is essentially designed to assist humans in making their jobs more effective, particularly in education. It is a critical tool that can change the way students learn. It gives students access to a wealth of information and tools, allowing them to learn quickly. Students can also participate in interactive and collaborative learning experiences. Students can also benefit from personalized learning with technology, where the material is tailored to their needs and learning styles (Grant & Basye, 2014). Technology is vital in enhancing educational quality and preparing students for the future, including language education. It permeates every facet of our daily lives and our tasks at work (Astri, Noer, et al., 2022; Astri, Nur, et al., 2022).

Related to language education itself, Drigas & Pappas (2015) stated that technology could improve students' capability and help students to learn faster. Using technology, specifically the use of computer-assisted language learning, can help students to find the right media to learn. Meanwhile, studies on the use of technology in language learning by Yurdagül & Öz (2018) stated that mobile technologies help learn and use foreign languages. Such as utilizing a dictionary, listening to language-learning materials, viewing videos,

practicing writing, vocabulary, and reading, doing research, translating, perfecting pronunciation, using language-learning applications, and chatting with friends are all examples of this. They also append that competition and information exchange through chat were other factors that participants felt made language learning more fun.

This learning environment has become stronger because of the internet, which provides quick accessibility and a massive source of information that has created new behavior for students to learn (Forsyth & Ian, 2013; Li et al., 2018). It changes the way students access information and study something. To promote this learning environment, the university, as the center of learning in society, should also provide a great environment for online learning. Gurley (2018) stated that educators' readiness to teach in blended and online learning environments significantly impacts their perceptions of how effectively they facilitate learning. The study focused on educators' preparation to teach, their perceived teaching presence, and their behaviors related to teaching presence in blended and online learning settings, highlighting the importance of specific faculty training to facilitate learning in such courses.

Preparing such as standardized facility will cost lots of money, so educators should also be creative in finding affordable online learning media for students to learn. One of the biggest companies that provide educational apps is Google. Google for Education is a comprehensive suite of tools and resources to transform the traditional classroom into a dynamic and collaborative learning environment. This suite of services includes popular Google tools like Gmail, Drive, and Classroom, all designed specifically for the needs of educators and students. With Google for Education, teachers can create digital classrooms, assign, and grade homework, and communicate with students and parents in one place.

Furthermore, students can use the suite of tools to collaborate with peers on group projects, access, and share class materials, and turn in homework assignments. Google for Education is designed to make learning more accessible and to support educators as they work to engage and inspire their students. Additionally, it is free for schools and educational institutions to use, making it an attractive option for budget-conscious schools.

Google Docs is one of the Google applications that is used in learning English writing. It uses artificial intelligence (AI) to provide users with advanced features such as grammar and spelling corrections, formatting, and organization recommendations. It also allows users to automate chores such as creating tables, adding citations, and more. The AI also makes Google Docs more available to users with disabilities by enabling text-to-speech and dictation. Furthermore, Google Docs uses AI to improve its search functionality, making it easier for users to discover relevant documents.

Overall, incorporating AI into Google Docs improves the user experience and makes the software more efficient and effective.

According to Syarifudin (2020), many students in the English Study Program State Islamic University of Mataram who are learning English as a foreign language experience high levels of writing anxiety. To help alleviate this anxiety, teachers need to be innovative in their approach. He discovered that the lack of effective feedback was the least common source of anxiety among students regarding their writing. So, by looking at Google Docs' features and benefits, it may be a possible solution for addressing the issue of writing anxiety and providing constructive feedback to EFL students.

Another study from Ebadi & Rahimi (2017) conducted a study that found that using Google Docs is a more effective way for EFL learners to enhance their academic writing skills. EFL learners can use Google Docs to share and peer-edit their writing assignments, which is cost-effective and efficient. Through this, students can post their writing to their peers and instructors, allowing for editing, commenting, and feedback that can help quickly improve their academic writing skills, both in and out of the classroom. In addition, Hoang & Hoang (2022) also found that students value the usefulness of Google Docs-based collaboration in improving their English academic writing abilities. The use of Google Docs can help students in writing assignments.

However, besides the usefulness of Google Docs, it is also essential to understand the students' anxiety in writing essays through Google Docs, especially students who use Google Docs for the first time; moreover, students in developing countries such as Indonesia. Students in developing countries often have a fear of using technology to study due to several reasons. Many of them may not have access to reliable technology and the internet, and even if they do, they may not have the technical knowledge to use it effectively (Adnan & Anwar, 2020). Additionally, technology and internet access can be costly, leading to concerns about the affordability and sustainability of using it for learning. Furthermore, students may also have privacy and security concerns about using technology for their studies and the lack of adequate support to troubleshoot technical issues. All these factors contribute to the fear and hesitation of students in developing countries to embrace technology in their education. So, this study is crucial to investigate since none of the authors best known has investigated students' level of anxiety in writing essays through Google Docs. This study is also expected to give educators preferences and insight into the use of mobile-assisted language learning, especially using Google Docs as media for online writing, and also to give insight into the educational physiology perspective about students' anxiety and its factor toward google docs.

METHOD

This study utilized a quantitative data collection method. Gunawan (2013) as cited in (Astri & Fian, 2020) stated that qualitative research is a kind of research without statistical procedures or other forms of calculation.

The research participants were 3rd Semester students from Universitas Islam Makassar, English Literature Study Program, enrolled in an essay writing class. The sample consisted of 10 students (6 females and 4 males) selected by using convenience sampling. As these students had already completed the Essay Writing course in the previous semester, they were deemed the most appropriate subjects for the study as they had sufficient writing experience. In order to gain data, the researcher employed questionnaires adapted from (Cheng, 2004)., called the Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI). It consisted of 22 items, divided into three categories: Cognitive Anxiety, Avoidance Behavior, and Somatic Anxiety.

The questionnaire was a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). According to Cheng, a mean score of above 65 is indicated as high, below 50 is low anxiety, and 50-65 is indicated as moderate. Each type of category was also analyzed to find out the level of each category that students experienced. Meanwhile, to find out the anxiety causes that students experienced, the researcher adapted a questionnaire from (Zhang, 2011) that was then converted and ranked according to its percentage.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Level of writing Anxiety

The level of students' anxiety in writing is obtained from the previously mentioned questionnaire, consisting of 22 items. It used a five-point Likert response scale to determine the degree of writing anxiety. Table 1 presents the information that the students provided via the questionnaire.

Table 1. Level of Students' Anxiety Level

Student	Questionnaire Item																						Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	
1	3	3	4	3	3	4	2	4	5	3	4	3	4	4	4	2	4	1	2	3	3	3	71
2	2	2	2	3	3	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	3	3	3	51
3	3	4	3	4	2	3	3	2	3	4	4	3	3	2	3	2	3	3	2	4	3	2	65
4	4	5	3	2	4	5	4	4	5	3	5	3	4	5	3	3	1	1	3	3	3	2	75
5	1	4	4	3	5	3	4	4	5	2	4	2	5	3	2	1	1	2	2	2	4	1	64
6	3	4	3	2	1	3	3	2	3	1	5	3	5	4	3	2	4	2	3	5	3	2	66
7	1	1	1	2	2	2	4	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	4	2	35
8	2	3	3	2	4	2	4	3	3	4	3	4	3	2	3	3	2	2	3	3	3	2	63
9	3	4	3	1	3	4	5	5	5	3	5	5	5	3	3	3	1	3	3	4	4	1	76
10	3	3	3	4	2	2	2	4	3	3	2	3	3	2	2	3	3	4	2	4	4	3	64
Total Score																							630
Mean Score																							63

The table above shows the number of students and their responses to 22 items of the SLWAI questionnaire to figure out their writing anxiety level using google docs. It reveals that the total score of the student's response is 630, divided by the number of students 10 to find the mean score (63). It indicates that the student's anxiety level is in the medium/moderate category because the mean score is below 65. This finding looks slightly different from the previous study that indicates students were in the high-level category (Huwari & Abd Aziz, 2011; Syarifudin, 2020; Wahyuni, 2018). This finding can be translated into that students still show anxiety symptoms in writing, such as nervousness and difficulties in organizing their thoughts and producing ideas while writing in less alert (Atay & Kurt, 2006; Ekmekçi, 2018).

To explore more about this finding, it is crucial to understand the types of anxiety the students face in writing towards google docs. The following table shows the percentages of each item that students have responded to figure out the value of the three types of anxiety, namely Cognitive Anxiety in items number 1,3,7,9,14,17,20,21, Avoidance Behavior in items number 4,5,10,12,16,18,22, and Somatic Anxiety in items number 2,6,8,11,13,15,19.

Table 2. Questionnaire's Frequency and Percentage (SWLAI) adapted from Cheng (2004).

No	Item	Scale									
		SD	%	D	%	M	%	A	%	SA	%
1	When writing in English using google docs, I'm not nervous at all	0	0%	1	10%	5	50%	2	20%	2	20%
2	I feel my heart beating fast when I write an English essay under a time limit using google docs.	1	10%	1	10%	3	30%	4	40%	1	10%
3	When writing an English essay using google docs, I feel worried and uneasy if I know it will be evaluated	1	10%	1	10%	6	60%	2	20%	0	0%
4	I often choose to write down my thoughts in English using google docs	0	0%	2	20%	3	30%	4	40%	1	10%
5	I usually do my best to avoid writing English compositions using google docs	1	10%	3	30%	3	30%	2	20%	1	10%
6	My mind often goes blank when I start working on English compositions using google docs.	0	0%	4	40%	3	30%	2	20%	1	10%
7	I'm not worried that my written English using google docs is much worse than others	0	0%	3	30%	2	20%	4	40%	1	10%
8	I tremble and sweat as I wrote an English essay using google docs under time pressure	1	10%	3	30%	1	10%	4	40%	1	10%
9	If my English writing using google docs will be evaluated, I'm afraid I will get a very bad grade	1	10%	0	0%	5	50%	0	0%	4	40%

No	Item	Scale									
		SD	%	D	%	M	%	A	%	SA	%
10	I try to avoid situations where I have to write in English using google docs as much as possible.	2	20%	2	20%	4	40%	2	20%	0	0%
11	My thoughts were jumbled when I wrote an essay in English using google docs under a time limit	1	10%	2	20%	1	10%	3	30%	3	30%
12	Unless I have no choice, I will not use English to write an essay using google docs	0	0%	3	30%	5	50%	1	10%	1	10%
13	I often feel panicked when writing English essays if given a time limit	1	10%	1	10%	3	30%	2	20%	3	30%
14	I'm afraid other students will ridicule my written English if they read it	1	10%	4	40%	2	20%	2	20%	1	10%
15	I freeze up when suddenly asked to write an English essay using google docs.	1	10%	3	30%	5	50%	1	10%	0	0%
16	I will try to find reasons if asked to write an English essay using Google Docs	2	20%	4	40%	4	40%	0	0%	0	0%
17	I'm not worried about what other people think of my English writing using google docs	0	0%	2	20%	2	20%	2	20%	4	40%
18	I usually look for every possible opportunity to write English composition outside of class using google docs.	0	0%	1	10%	3	30%	4	40%	2	20%
19	I usually feel my whole body stiff and tense when writing English essays with google docs	1	10%	5	50%	4	40%	0	0%	0	0%
20	I am afraid that my written English will be selected as a sample to be discussed in class	0	0%	2	20%	4	40%	3	30%	1	10%
21	I'm not afraid at all if my essay will be graded very badly	0	0%	0	0%	6	60%	4	40%	0	0%
22	If there is a chance, I will use English to write an essay with google docs	2	20%	5	50%	3	30%	0	0%	0	0%

From the table above, the percentages of the three types of anxiety can be categorized and seen in the following graphic.
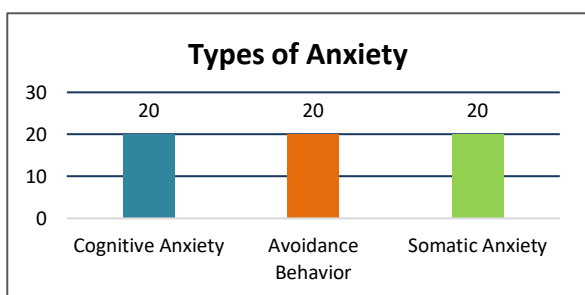

Figure 1. Types of Anxiety (Cheng, 2004)

From the graphic above, it can be seen that the three types of anxiety that the students have are identical, where cognitive anxiety, avoidance behavior, and somatic anxiety are at the same level (20). It shows that students have all types of anxiety when they write essays through google docs. Students' cognitive anxiety involves negative thoughts and worries about the situation, such as fear of failure, feeling overwhelmed, and self-doubt (Flett et al., 2016;

Gibson, 2014). Meanwhile, avoidance behavior is where students avoid or put off writing tasks, despite the negative consequences of not completing them (Narayan et al., 2011a, 2011b). And somatic anxiety is when students are afraid of criticism, the stress of deadlines or being graded, or technical difficulties using Google Docs (Wern & Rahmat, 2021). None of these types of anxiety shows a higher percentage of anxiety, according to data taken from Questionnaire 1. The results are slightly different from the previous study that cognitive anxiety is more dominant other than the other types of anxiety (Hartono & Maharani, 2020; Nugroho & Ena, 2021; Rezaei & Jafari, 2014; Syarifudin, 2020; Wern & Rahmat, 2021).

Besides knowing the types of anxiety, the students have, it is also important to understand the cause of anxiety they have in writing essays through google docs. To obtain data, a questionnaire is employed. The results show the cause of anxiety in the following figure.
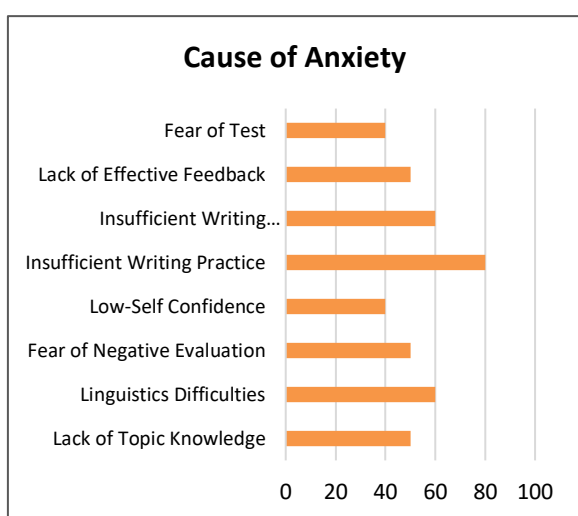

Figure 2. Cause of Anxiety (Zhang, 2011)

The figure above shows that insufficient writing practice is the number one cause of anxiety that students have (80), followed by insufficient writing technique and linguistics difficulties (60). it is in line with the previous study that those two causes still become the major factors in students' anxiety in writing (Cindewangi & Arini, 2023; Jafari, 2019; Rezaei & Jafari, 2014). This insufficient can lead students to be lacking and unfamiliar with writing with Google Docs: If students are not familiar with it, they may feel anxious about using it for writing. They may worry about making mistakes, losing their work, or not knowing how to use the software properly. It can lead to cognitive anxiety as they may worry about technical difficulties, formatting issues, time management while writing essays through Google Docs, and other problems. Providing students with clear guidance and instruction can be used as strategies to reduce anxiety and improve their students' writing skills.

Lack of effective feedback, Fear of peer feedback or negative evaluation, and lack of topic knowledge simultaneously are at the same level (50). Google Docs is supposed to become a good platform for delivering feedback. It allows for easy collaboration and sharing, meaning students can receive feedback from their peers (Suwantarathip & Wichadee, 2014). However, some students may feel anxious about receiving feedback from their peers, especially if they are not confident about their writing skills (Yastıbaş & Yastıbaş, 2015). Lack of topic knowledge can

also be a significant obstacle to effective writing (Ekmekçi, 2018; Ekpoh, 2016). When someone lacks knowledge on a topic, they may struggle to generate ideas, organize their thoughts, and provide relevant evidence to support their arguments. Overall, a lack of topic knowledge can be a significant obstacle to effective writing. However, by conducting research, seeking help, narrowing the focus, and practicing, individuals can overcome this obstacle and produce more effective and well-informed writing. With adequate knowledge, ideas can be generated, thoughts can be organized, and relevant evidence can be provided to support the argument, resulting in more persuasive and compelling writing.

Among all factors contributing to the anxiety causes, lack of confidence and fear of tests are the lowest among the other indicators of anxiety cause (40). Some individuals may lack confidence in their writing abilities and feel that they are not capable of producing high-quality work. (Fischer & Meyers, 2017). It can lead to avoidance behavior as they may feel their efforts will be futile. The fear of tests is also become the cause of anxiety that students encounter. It arises when one is faced with the possibility of taking an exam or test where one might worry about their grades, their future, and the opinions of others (Kaplan & Saccuzzo, 2017).

CONCLUSION

Higher students' anxiety when using Google Docs to write an essay can significantly affect their academic success and well-being.

Already a difficult job, writing an essay calls for research, organization, and critical thinking abilities. However, when students share the document through Google Docs, they are frequently under additional pressure to produce high-quality work while being aware of their peers' expectations and feedback. This stress can cause cognitive and somatic anxiety, which can appear in various ways, including excessive concern, procrastination, physical symptoms, and negative self-talk.

The dread of criticism is one of the main causes of anxiety. Students expose themselves to possible criticism and feedback from their peers when they share their writing through Google Docs. Feelings of vulnerability and self-doubt may result from this, which may lead to an increase in worry. Students' anxiety levels may also increase due to technical issues, particularly if unfamiliar with the site. For instance, if students have trouble formatting or uploading the paper, they might get irritated and overwhelmed, which can worsen their anxiety. Another element that raises students' anxiety when composing an essay in Google Docs is performance anxiety. Students who are required to submit superior work may feel frightened.

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