

## Indonesian EFL Students' Writing Efficacy and Writing Performance

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### **Abstract:**

*This paper aims at reporting research findings on the students' perceived writing self-efficacy, the students' self-awareness of their writing abilities and the relationship between students' writing self-efficacy and their writing performance. By using descriptive quantitative method, the result shows that most of the students have medium writing self-efficacy and average writing ability. And the relationship between students' writing self-efficacy and their writing performance shows a weak relationship. This study is expected to give contribution toward related literatures concerning with the relationship between students' writing self-efficacy and their writing performance.*

**Key Words:** *writing self-efficacy, writing performance*

### **Introduction**

English language learners need to give more portion of attention to writing. As it plays as the important means of written communication by which they can show ability and knowledge of using the target language (TL). However, writing is not a simple or easy skill to learn. It is a highly complex task which requires a number of processes, such as planning, drafting, making revision, and finalizing the draft that has to include the learners' knowledge of developing themes, paragraph, sentence, grammar and lexical in order meet the purpose, audience and medium of communication ( Jalaludin, 2013; Ryan, 2014). All of them should be performed simultaneously.

Judging from the complexity of writing tasks, it is often found that learners feel inferior related with their writing skills and downed for all the writing activities that they have to do. As it seems, EFL learners should work hard to develop and improve their writing abilities. Learners' problem in writing ranges from the mechanical problems, such as capitalization and punctuation to a more sophisticated problems dealing with their processes of their writing (Scott and Vitale, 2003). Moreover, Harmer (2000) adds the problems that include planning and revising and the absence of feedback from the more capable person make writing even look more devastating skill for the learners.

Putting aside the prominent difficulties, there is still a chance for the learners to become competent writers by teaching them appropriately the skills and the process approach in writing. By giving more attention to the learners' need of guidance and support with their writing, they will be motivated and care about what they are going to write. Marchisan and Alber (2001) mention that learners' motivation to write can be developed by helping the learners to have

confidence in writing, providing the goals of writing, giving supportive atmosphere for writing that at the end will create a positive emotional feeling of optimism in their academic environment.

### **Review of Literature**

Based on the arguments mentioned above, it is, therefore very important for learners to be able to build self confidence in writing which then will help them to improve their skill in writing. Self-confidence, self-beliefs or to be more specific self-efficacy is defined as beliefs of one's ability to organize and accomplish an action to achieve or reach the goal (Bandura, 1997). It is related with personal autonomous effort to be able to deal a certain task. The autonomous effort is not merely based on actual past experience or existing ability and skills but also on students' perceptions of their own knowledge and ability relative to the task or situation (De Ture, 2004). It can be said that self-efficacy will determine one's behavior and actions in achieving the intended goals. This is due to the fact that those who have high self-efficacy beliefs would set higher goals, persist at any obstacles and are more successful in academic achievement (Swanson, 2013; Wang & Pape, 2007).

A positive way of looking personal efficacy affect what learners' do in fulfilling their academic demand to achieve academic success. Pajares (2003) states that a strong sense of confidence, for example, may serve students well when writing an essay because it engenders greater interest in and attention to writing, stronger effort, and greater perseverance and resiliency in the face of adversity. Fatemi & Vahidnia (2013) support that the crucial factors in the development of the writing skill of L2 learners is motivation and encouragement. Therefore the teaching of writing skill must include the cognitive, behavioral and motivational engagement of students, which is later on will increase writing self-efficacy. A definition of writing self-efficacy can be a student's way of looking at him/herself related with his or her ability to successfully perform writing tasks at a given level (Shell, Murphy, & Bruning, 1989). It means that students with a high level of writing self-efficacy have strong confidence in writing ability. On the contrary, those who have low level of writing self-efficacy do not have sufficient confidence in the writing skill. Once learners hold this strong belief they will be less anxious, have stronger feeling of their own ability in writing and have high determination to solve problems they face in their writing activities. In other words, there is a possible relationship or correlation between one's self-efficacy and one's achievement.

There have been many studies on the role of self-efficacy which support a growing body of findings from different fields of study not only in the United States but also around the world. The studies mostly on the relationship between self-efficacy and academic outcomes. Researchers have reported that students' self-efficacy beliefs are correlated with the students' reading comprehension and reading proficiency (Yogurtcu, 2012 and Boakye, 2015), students' speaking performance (Sundari & Dasmo, 2014). Unfortunately there is a little attention from

self-efficacy researchers to study about written composition. This is contrary to the fact that composition plays at all levels throughout the academic curriculum. Some of the researchers (Hashemnejad et.al 2014; Schunk and Zimmerman, 2007) who have conducted studies on self-efficacy beliefs and writing skills agree that there is a relationship between the two. Their studies were conducted to explore the relationship self-efficacy and writing to find out the correlational between scores self-efficacy and holistic essay scores. Moreover Chen and Ju-Lin (2009) in their study, support the idea that students with higher writing self-efficacy has high score in writing. They also found that there was a negative correlation between writing test and writing anxiety. Negative correlation also happened between writing self-efficacy and writing anxiety. On the other hand Jalaluddin (2013) found that the students who obtained higher grades in composition perceived lower self-efficacy than those who did not. She also found that from qualitative data there were distinct style of writing between high self-efficacy writer and low self-efficacy writer and scores show that low self-efficacy writer performed better than high self-efficacy writer.

A different approach of study by Webb et.al (2015), focused on examining the change in writing self-efficacy in a sample of talented middle and high school students taking enriched summer writing classes. Furthermore, they evaluated the association of writing self-efficacy with final course grade. They found that, first writing self-efficacy increased for some, but not for all, writing courses on one of the two writing self-efficacy scales, and did not increase on the other writing self-efficacy scale. Second, there were no differences were found in the extent of change in self-efficacy based on gender and course type. Third, regardless of the type of writing self-efficacy, gender differences seemed to exist for final grade across the courses, but one interaction between gender and change in approach to writing emerged on final course grade.

It is clear that there have been a number of studies done to prove the existence of correlation between writing self-efficacy and writing performance. This study is done to find out the students' perceived writing self-efficacy, the students' self-awareness of their writing ability, and the correlation between the students' writing self-efficacy and the writing performance.

## **Methodology**

This study employed descriptive quantitative design. The descriptive design was applied to reach the first and the second objective of the study. Whereas for the third objective, a Pearson's product-moment correlation was used to assess the relationship between students' writing skills and writing self-efficacy level. The participants of this study were 26 students of English Department of State University of Surabaya majoring English education program.

The students were given a questionnaire and gave their response on the questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of three parts. The first part is to get the demographic information from the students. The second part deals with students' writing self-efficacy (WSE). This part was used to reach the first objective of the study. The last part of the questionnaire is an open-ended questions asking about the students' opinions which was intended to get the information

on the students' awareness of their writing ability. This part consists of 6 questions. Questions 1, 2, 3 and 6 deal with students' self-awareness of their writing ability. Whereas questions 4 and 5 deal with the learning environment and teacher's role in supporting the students' success in writing.

To reach the third objective of the study, the students' process essays were collected and scored by the two raters. By using Pearson's product-moment correlation was used to assess the relationship between students' writing performance and writing self-efficacy level.

### Findings and Discussion

The adaptation of Prat-Sala & Redford, 2010; Kaplan, Lichtinger, & Gorodetsky, 2009 writing self-efficacy scale was used to get the result of the study which was related with the students' perceived writing self-efficacy. For the writing self-efficacy score and writing score the researcher divided the score into three, high, medium and low writing self-efficacy score and writing score. The researcher used the hypothetic way of dividing the score and came up the groupings:

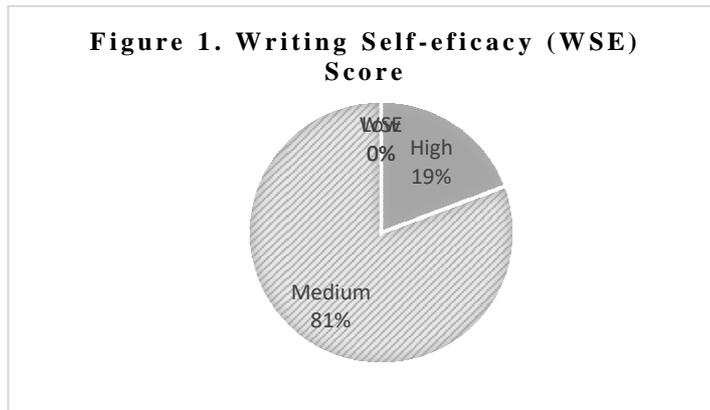
**Table 1:  
Writing Self-efficacy (WSE) Score Grouping**

WSE score	
High	56 - 75
Medium	36 - 55
Low	15 - 35

**Table 2:  
Writing Score Grouping**

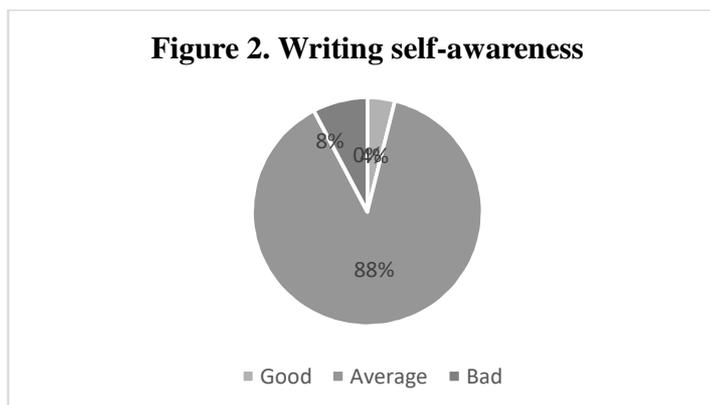
Writing Score	
High	76 – 100
Medium	41 – 75
Low	0 - 40

Based on the calculation of the score of the writing self-efficacy (WSE), the researcher got the data that there were 5 (19%) students with high writing self-efficacy score and 21 (81%) students with medium writing self-efficacy score. There was no students with low score in writing self-efficacy. As we can see in Figure 1.



The finding which showed that no students had low score in WSE might be caused by the fact that they have learnt English for about 9 to 12 years. They have learnt how to write many different genres of text starting from junior high school until senior high school. Their prior knowledge and experience in writing helped them shape their writing efficacy.

As for the students' self-awareness of their writing ability, the researcher used the third part of the questionnaire which was in the form of open-ended questions. It consisted of 6 questions. And questions number 1, 2, 3 and 6 were related with the students' self-awareness of their writing ability and questions 4 and 5 were about the role of the learning environment and the lecturer in supporting the students' success in writing (See Appendix 2). The result showed that most of the students 23 (88%) stated that they had an average writing ability. There were 2 (8%) students stated that they did not have a good ability in writing. And only 1 (4%) student stated that h/she had a good ability in writing. The same As it is shown in Figure 2.



For questions 4 which was about the role of learning environment, such as classroom, facilities, and friends, most of the students stated that the learning environment was very important and could help them to write better. And as for question 5, the majority of the students stated that the lecturer's clear feedback and the chances to consult with the lecturer were very influencing in their motivation to better essay.

Based on the result of the study, many of the students considered their writing self-efficacy and writing ability awareness in the medium and average level respectively. However, these students got high score for their writing. It is in line with the study conducted by Jalaluddin (2013), students with lower self-efficacy get high grades for their writing. It shows that the students are actually not quite confident enough with their writing ability. In spite of the fact that they have learnt English for about 9 to 12 years. In reality their compositions are good. It is proven by the result from the raters for their writing scores. The medium self-efficacy and average writing self-awareness might also be caused by the fact that they are still in their second year of their 4 years study at the English department. The result is in contrast with Chen and Ju-Lin study (2009), students with high writing self-efficacy has high score in writing.

The result of the study concerning with whether or not there is a correlation between students' self-efficacy and their writing performance, can be seen from the table 3 (see Appendix 1). As mentioned earlier that the students' writing self-efficacy data was collected by using the writing self-efficacy scale adapted from Prat-Sala & Redford, 2010; Kaplan, Lichtinger, & Gorodetsky, 2009. And as for writing score data was collected from the students' essays which then scored by two raters. From Table 2 we can see that there 21 students with medium WSE score and only 5 of the students got high WSE score. The data for the students' writing score shows that there were 15 students with high writing score and 11 students with average writing score. Table 2 also shows the data that from 5 students with high self-efficacy score 2 of them got average writing score. And from 21 students with medium self-efficacy score, 12 of them got high writing score.

Another finding is related with result the students' self-awareness of their writing ability and their writing score. If we compare the result on Figure 2 and Table 2, we can find the information that from 23 students who rated themselves to have average writing ability, 15 of them got high writing score. The researcher then combine the findings of writing ability self-awareness, writing self-efficacy, and writing score, he found that from 23 students with average writing ability, 19 of them has medium level of writing self-efficacy and 11 out of 19 students got high writing score.

The result of the calculation to assess the correlation between students' WSE and their writing performance by using Pearson's product-moment was 0.083. It shows that there was no correlation between students' WSE and their writing performance. It is in line with Jalaluddin (2009), students' writing self-efficacy in the areas of General (GPR), Progress (SPR), Social Feedback (SF), and Physiological States (PS) have no correlation with students' writing performance. Hashemnejad et.al (2014) also found that there is no relationship between students' writing self-efficacy and their writing performance. This present study's finding that there is no correlation between students' WSE and their writing performance is due to first, the fact that many of the students still do not feel efficacious in their writing. The second factor that might contribute to the finding is that the students' compositions are actually the final product after

being edited and revised based on the peer feedback and teacher feedback. That explains that more than 50% of the students get high score for their writing. This study also supports Pajares's statement (2000), who claims that the inner procedures of learners and the beliefs they grasp about their capabilities must be given due to attention, since they might contribute to success or failure in school.

## Conclusion

This article has shown that the students' writing self-efficacy and students' self-awareness of their writing ability do not always describe students' writing performance. The second year students of English department still think that they are not efficacious enough and have average ability in writing. Interestingly many of the students get high writing score. This is due to the fact that the students have a good and supportive environment and writing lecturers.

This study also contributes to the understanding of students' writing self-efficacy which can give information for the educators to keep on developing innovative and effective teaching materials based on the present study's findings. It is also important for the educators to upgrade their pedagogical practices especially in fulfilling teacher's role as facilitator which is to provide opportunities for learning and develops learner autonomy. The final goal of all of the efforts is to help learners develop their substantive knowledge of the writing process and effective writing strategies. In the end it could increase learners' writing self- efficacy that will give advantage for the students in their lifelong learning experiences.

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## Appendixes

### Appendix 1

Table 3. Students' WSE and Writing Score

Students	Writing self-fficacy score	Writing score
1	47	71,5
2	48	84
3	57	61
4	56	58,5
5	62	83,5
6	45	76,5
7	66	84
8	55	74
9	45	81
10	50	84,5
11	37	77,5
12	53	85
13	52	90
14	48	81,5
15	55	67,5
16	50	68
17	58	86
18	51	77,5
19	55	83,5
20	44	58,5
21	49	75,5
22	47	67
23	52	58
24	50	66,5
25	42	85
26	40	73

Appendix 2

Writing Self-Efficacy Scale

Directions: This questionnaire is designed particularly for writing in order to help us gain a better understanding of the kinds of things that create differences among students in their confidence dealing with various writing assignments and activities. Please indicate your opinion about each of the statements below. **Your identity and answers are confidential.**

Part I. Personal Background Information

**Instruction:** Give a check (✓) on the choices given.

Name/NIM	
Age group	18-20 ( ) 21-23 ( ) 24-26 ( ) 27-30 ( )
Other foreign language(s)	Korean ( ) Chinese ( ) Germany ( ) Other ( )
Years of formal English study	5-8 ( ) 9-12 ( ) 13-16 ( ) 16+ ( )

Part II. Writing Self-Efficacy

**Instruction:** Read the process essay prompts below and choose one you would prefer to write about. Please indicate your personal opinion on the following statements **by circling** the appropriate response at the right of each statement.

**KEY: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree**

1	I can think of my writing goals before I write	1	2	3	4	5
2	I know some writing strategies	1	2	3	4	5
3	I can write grammatically correct paragraph	1	2	3	4	5
4	I can use correct punctuation marks	1	2	3	4	5
5	I will be able to start writing an essay easily	1	2	3	4	5
6	Even if i don't like the topic, i will still be able to write a good essay	1	2	3	4	5
7	I can make a good outline for an essay	1	2	3	4	5
8	I can write a good introduction to inform the reader of my goal	1	2	3	4	5

	in writing the essay					
9	I can put ideas together in a paragraph in such a way that the reader will understand my ideas	1	2	3	4	5
10	I can link sentences together to make a well-organized paragraph	1	2	3	4	5
11	If i get stuck while I am writing, I will be able to find ways to overcome the problem	1	2	3	4	5
12	When writing an essay I will be able to think of arguments to support my ideas	1	2	3	4	5
13	I can write a good conclusion to inform the reader concerning with the restatement of the main idea of the essay	1	2	3	4	5
14	I will be able to revise my essay's draft to make a better-organized essay	1	2	3	4	5
15	I will be able to manage my time effectively to finish writing the essay	1	2	3	4	5

Part III. Personal opinion on writing experience and self-efficacy

1. Up to this present time, how do you see yourself as a writer? (good, everage, or bad). Please explain your answer.
2. If you were asked to rate your ability in writing an essay on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 10 (highest), where would you be? Why?
3. When you face a problem writing an essay, how do you deal with it?
4. How does the learning environment (classroom, friends, facilities) help you write better?
5. What could your lecturer do to help you feel more confident in your writing abilities?
6. Under what conditions do you
  - a. perform well on writing assignments? Why?
  - b. perform less well on writing assignments? Why?

(Adapted from Prat-Sala & Redford, 2010; Kaplan, Lichtinger, & Gorodetsky, 2009.)