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EFL STUDENTS' ANXIETY IN WRITING AND THEIR CORRELATION WITH EPISTEMIC BELIEFS

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ABSTRACT

Writing in English as a foreign language is a common source of anxiety among university students due to its complex cognitive demands and the influence of students' epistemic beliefs. This study investigates the levels and types of writing anxiety, the degree of students' epistemic beliefs, and the relationship between these beliefs and writing anxiety. Using a quantitative, descriptive design, data were collected from 92 English Language Education students through the Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) and an epistemic beliefs questionnaire. Analysis with SPSS Version 29 revealed moderate levels of writing anxiety overall, with 42 students experiencing high anxiety, 35 moderate, and 15 low. Cognitive anxiety emerged as the most prevalent type, followed by somatic and avoidant behavioral anxiety. Regarding epistemic beliefs, 29 students displayed sophisticated beliefs, while 63 had simpler beliefs. A significant but weak correlation was found between epistemic beliefs and writing anxiety, suggesting that while beliefs impact anxiety, the effect is minimal. These findings highlight the nuanced interplay between cognitive and psychological factors in EFL writing.
Keywords: EFL students; epistemic beliefs; writing anxiety

ABSTRAK

Menulis dalam bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing merupakan sumber kecemasan yang umum terjadi di kalangan mahasiswa karena tuntutan kognitifnya yang kompleks dan pengaruh keyakinan epistemik mahasiswa. Penelitian ini menyelidiki tingkat dan jenis kecemasan menulis, tingkat keyakinan epistemik mahasiswa, dan hubungan antara keyakinan ini dan kecemasan menulis. Dengan menggunakan desain deskriptif kuantitatif, data dikumpulkan dari 92 mahasiswa Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris melalui Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) dan kuesioner keyakinan epistemik. Analisis dengan SPSS Versi 29 menunjukkan tingkat kecemasan menulis yang moderat secara keseluruhan, dengan 42 siswa mengalami kecemasan tinggi, 35 sedang, dan 15 rendah. Kecemasan kognitif muncul sebagai jenis yang paling banyak ditemukan, diikuti oleh kecemasan somatik dan kecemasan perilaku menghindar. Mengenai keyakinan epistemik, 29 siswa menunjukkan pandangan yang canggih, sementara 63 siswa memiliki keyakinan yang lebih sederhana. Korelasi yang signifikan namun lemah ditemukan antara keyakinan epistemik dan kecemasan menulis, yang menunjukkan bahwa meskipun keyakinan berdampak pada kecemasan, efeknya minimal. Temuan ini menyoroti interaksi yang bernuansa antara faktor kognitif dan psikologis dalam penulisan EFL.
Kata kunci: siswa EFL; keyakinan epistemik; kecemasan menulis

INTRODUCTION

Writing, a fundamental ability for English as a foreign language (EFL) students, frequently induces anxiety among college students. According to Burns and Siegel (2018), proficient speakers are language learners who are skilled in the four fundamental language abilities: listening, speaking, reading, and writing (as cited in Bui et al., 2023). EFL writing is an essential part of learning a language because it is one of the fundamental skills used and fostered in teaching students (Cer, 2019). Then, Alisha, Safitri, and Santoso (2019) also stated that writing is a complex process encompassing several cognitive and metacognitive skills, such as brainstorming, planning, outlining, organizing, drafting, and revising.

Writing is an essential skill for EFL students at the university level that requires linguistic understanding and goes through a complex process. As writing is an important skill to be mastered by students, EFL writing proficiency is essential for university students as it is one of the productive skills used to communicate ideas in writing that uses written symbols to represent language (Afdalia et al., 2023). In addition to communicating ideas at the university level, writing skills are essential in assignments, especially final ones, to complete their studies. According to Cer (2019), writing is a complex process because it is one of the skills needed to create symbols and signs to communicate our feelings and thoughts. In addition, writing is seen as a difficult task since it requires a lengthy learning process, and pupils must grasp linguistic elements and attitudes, like the willingness to practice writing multiple times (Muamaroh et al., 2020). Students need to learn and understand linguistic elements, and repeated writing practice is necessary because, as EFL students, there is a need to adapt and acquire English so as not to get stuck in the native language.

Due to the complexity of English composition, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students frequently encounter many English writing challenges. Many researchers have previously examined EFL students' challenges and errors in writing. Aldabbus (2017) explained some of the reasons that hinder students' writing skills, which, in essence, are the strong influence of the mother tongue on the target language, such as different sentence structures, different word order, different spelling systems, and the use of various articles. Because of that, composing a coherent and well-structured piece of writing in a language that is not one's native language can be challenging and daunting for EFL students. Furthermore, Helala and Aboubou (2020) found that students had difficulties with grammar issues, lack of vocabulary, mechanics, content, organization, and mother tongue interference. In addition, the main reasons that affect EFL students in improving their writing skills are, first, cognitive difficulties, such as difficulty pouring or explaining what is in their minds into writing; second, there are linguistic issues, such as a lack of vocabulary and grammar skills.; third, psychological difficulties, such as students worrying about making mistakes when writing; and last, finding reference sources to support their writing (Fitria, 2022). It can be concluded that EFL students experience difficulties in writing, such as spelling, punctuation, vocabulary, grammar, sentences, content, organization, and the psychological side, including anxiety in writing.

Based on the previous studies, the writing difficulties experienced by EFL students are influenced by factors directly related to writing and those that come from themselves, one of which comes from the psychological side that makes them feel anxious when writing in English. So, in addition to difficulties that are directly related to the competence of writing skills, students also experience anxiety in writing (Fitria, 2022). Anxiety is defined as a student's uneasiness, fears, and physiological responses while performing an activity that requires language ability, such as speaking, reading, or writing (Gardner & MacIntyre in Sabti et al., 2019). When someone is engaged in a writing task, they often feel overwhelmed by worry, known as writing anxiety, which is brought on by a combination of feelings, convictions, and behaviors that might impair their writing skills (AlSawalha & Chow in Quvanch & Na, 2022).

Moreover, according to Cheng (2004), writing anxiety refers to the anxiety that individuals experience during the writing process, which is influenced by somatic, cognitive, and behavioral factors. He stated that individuals with writing anxiety tend to experience difficulty in completing writing tasks, avoid writing activities, or feel pressured due to high standards or fear of judgment. Cheng (2004) divided writing anxiety into three types that are somatic anxiety, avoidance behavior, and cognitive anxiety. Somatic anxiety is defined as a condition related to an individual's physical symptoms of nervousness and tension. Then, avoidance behavior is a type of anxiety in the form of student behavior that avoids the writing process or activity, and cognitive anxiety is a subjective component related to mental aspects in the form of negative perceptions, such as worry or fear of negative evaluations given by others.

In the Indonesian context, writing anxiety frequently arises from students' diminished confidence in their English writing skills, insufficient exposure to process-oriented writing practices, and academic pressures to achieve flawless writing in accordance with formal standards, thereby establishing emotional and cognitive impediments to language acquisition. Several researchers have previously examined writing anxiety experienced by students where it was found that Indonesian EFL learners experience high writing anxiety, with cognitive being the most dominant anxiety faced by students, after somatic anxiety, avoidance behavior anxiety, and linguistic problems such as vocabulary and grammar errors, lack of practice, language difficulties, and inadequate writing techniques (Hartono & Maharani, 2019; Kusumaningputri et al., 2018). They explained that cognitive anxiety is the primary source of distraction when students write English papers. Students become increasingly stressed when they put too much pressure on themselves to produce error-free writing in both language and content. Their anxiety is exacerbated by negative beliefs, like the notion and thought that they would be an impending failure in writing, self-deprecation, and avoidance behaviors. In line with this, Toba, Noor, and Sanu (2019) discovered that individuals possess not only limited knowledge regarding writing components but also personal impediments, including insufficient writing practice, aversion to writing, writing anxiety, negative attitudes towards writing, low motivation, inadequate time allocated for writing, and an ineffective writing instruction process offered by educators. Aldabbus and Almansouri (2022) stated that lack of resources, writing practice opportunities, motivation, and ineffective instructor feedback are reasons for their academic writing weaknesses. So, there exists a correlation between students' perceived anxiousness, linguistic difficulties, and feedback from educators in EFL students.

Furthermore, some other studies with the same topic, namely writing anxiety, were provided. Researchers found two studies that had different results from those previously described, which revealed that the dominant anxiety was avoidance behavior, then cognitive and somatic anxiety (Sulfiana et al., (2021); Prasetyaningrum et al., (2021)). Avoidance behavior pertains to the behavioral aspects of anxiety, shown as the evasion of writing tasks, allowing pupils to avoid most English writing scenarios. Despite being EFL students for several years, individuals continue to struggle with structuring coherent English writing, indicating that they are apprehensive about attempting to write to evade errors (Sulfiana et al., 2021). Another study by Nawawi, Nirwanto, and Widyastuty (2024) stated that students' anxiety in the writing process, especially in English learning, is caused by internal factors such as lack of writing experience and external factors such as time pressure, evaluation methods, and language difficulties. The last study's findings revealed an average level of writing anxiety, predominantly cognitive, and the inferential analysis showed no significant variations in writing anxiety levels based on gender or year of study (Quvanch and Na, 2022). The principal factors contributing to writing anxiety were identified as linguistic challenges, time limitations, the pursuit of perfection, and the fear of negative instructor assessments.

Not only that, students' individual differences contribute to affect their writing anxiety. Among others, students' learning mindsets, which show beliefs regarding the nature of EFL knowledge and learning, namely epistemic beliefs (hereafter, EB), also impacted students' anxiety in writing. However, few previous studies have explored the correlation between writing anxiety and students' epistemic beliefs. In fact, learners' EB is directly and significantly affected by L2WA (Heidarzadi et al., 2022). This study was conducted to fill that research gap by exploring the relationship between EFL students' levels of epistemic beliefs and the writing anxiety that they have. Based on the phenomenon, this study focuses not only on writing anxiety but also on the epistemic beliefs held by EFL students. EFL epistemic beliefs are students' overall ideas about how they identify themselves in learning English and some of their teaching methods (Rahmiati et al., 2019). Epistemic beliefs consist of four levels, ranging from simple to sophisticated, and two factors make up epistemic beliefs about what knowledge is and how to acquire knowledge (Emaliana in Emaliana & Lailiyah, 2018). Students who hold simple epistemic beliefs are convinced that the teacher is the only source of learning to learn English, and they usually only focus on the outcome rather than the process. Therefore, they use grammar-translation approaches and cognitive techniques to learn English. On the other hand, students who possess sophisticated epistemic beliefs recognize that the sources of knowledge are extensive and not restricted to the teacher(s). They believe that consistent practice can facilitate their sustained acquisition of English. Furthermore, they assert that making errors during learning is intrinsic, as learning is a dynamic pursuit rather than a results-focused activity.

A previous study concluded that the contribution of epistemic beliefs and writing techniques had a positive correlation with writing achievement, whereas writing comprehension demonstrated a low negative correlation with writing achievement (Rahmiati et al., 2019). It proves epistemic beliefs strongly influence and relate to students' writing comprehension. It can also be found that there is writing anxiety in EFL students, whether it also has a correlation with epistemic beliefs, which is a gap that must be filled in this study. Based on some of the findings from previous research, many previous studies have discussed the factors that influence students' writing ability with different subjects, locations, and methodologies. Nevertheless, investigations into the correlation between students' writing anxiety and epistemic beliefs remain insufficient, prompting the researcher to explore this more. This study aims to determine the levels and types of anxiety experienced by EFL students in writing, assess their epistemic beliefs, and explore the relationship between epistemic beliefs and writing anxiety. The results can be used to create and improve the teaching and learning process and EFL students' ability to recognize writing anxiety with different epistemic beliefs. The researchers employed three research questions: 1. What are the levels and types of EFL students' anxiety in writing? 2. What are the levels of EFL students' epistemic beliefs? 3. Is there any correlation between writing anxiety and epistemic beliefs?

METHODS
Research design
This study employed a quantitative methodology using a descriptive research design. Creswell (2014) defines quantitative research methods as examining relationships between variables through testing theories, utilizing research instruments, and data analyzed using statistical procedures. The research instrument of this study used questionnaires. There are two questionnaires used in this study: Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory by Cheng (Cheng, 2004) and Epistemic Beliefs Levels by Emaliana, (Emaliana, 2017).

The initial questionnaire is the Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI), created by Cheng to assess the types and levels of anxiety in writing among EFL students (Cheng, 2004). This questionnaire comprises 22 items categorized into three types: cognitive anxiety (items 1, 3, 7, 9, 14, 17, 20, and 21), somatic anxiety (items 2, 6, 8, 11, 13, 15, and 19),

and avoidance behavior anxiety (items 4, 5, 10, 12, 16, 18, and 22). Among the total elements, seven (1, 4, 7, 17, 18, 21, and 22) were negatively worded and required reverse scoring prior to the computation of the overall score. The SLWAI uses a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

Researchers performed a pilot study to assess the validity and reliability of the questionnaire utilizing SPSS Version 29. Based on the pilot test results, of the 22 items, 21 items were considered to be significant, while 1 item was deemed not significant (18). So, item no 18 was not used in this study because it was not significant. Then, upon aggregating the total score of each item, the average value was categorized into three degrees, which are high, medium, and low, to assess the amount of anxiety. Scores beyond 64 were classified as high-level anxiety, ratings between 47 and 63 were defined as moderate-level anxiety, and under 47 were designated as low-level anxiety. The following formula was employed to calculate the average of each writing anxiety (Wahyuni & Umam, 2017).

Figure 1 SLWAI Calculation Formula

$$\text{The mean score M} = \frac{\sum fx}{\sum f}$$

M	: mean
f	: frequency
x	: 5-1(specific value given)
$\sum f$	: total number of students

In addition to SLWAI, this study also uses EFL Epistemic Beliefs levels to determine the level of epistemic beliefs held by students and to analyze the correlation between the two variables. Epistemic Beliefs Levels, was administered by Emaliana to test the EFL students' epistemic belief levels (Emaliana, 2017). Epistemic beliefs can be measured using various methods, one is a questionnaire designed to assess students' beliefs about knowledge and learning. In this study, researchers used an adapted questionnaire by Emaliana to measure EFL students' levels of epistemic beliefs. There are seven significant items included in this questionnaire. The questionnaire assesses two dimensions: the nature of knowledge and the process of acquiring knowledge. Out of the total items, six items (1, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7) were negatively phrased and evaluated inversely prior to computing the overall score. The EB questionnaire uses a four-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (4). The quantitative analysis yielded data in the form of averages. The trend of students' epistemic beliefs was ascertained from the highest mean of each question. The students' questionnaire findings regarding their epistemic beliefs were derived from the overall scores presented in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2 Epistemic Beliefs' Score

10 – 17 = Sophisticated Epistemic Beliefs

18 – 25 = Simple Epistemic Beliefs

Research site and participants

In this study, researchers conducted research at Universitas Brawijaya. There were 92 students majoring in the English Language Education Program who had taken the Academic Writing course batch 2020-2022 and became the participants of this study. The research was conducted using a random sampling method to choose the participants, remembering the

time and readiness of the students to participate in this research. In addition, in this study, which examines writing anxiety and epistemic beliefs of EFL students, random sampling is used because it allows researchers to obtain a representative sample of the student population so that the relationship between the two variables can be measured more objectively and the results are relevant to the wider population.

Data collection and analysis

The data was collected through the distribution of questionnaires to EFL students specializing in English Language Education at Brawijaya University. The questionnaire was sent to responders via a Google Form link accessible to EFL students for a designated period. The questionnaire was projected to take approximately 15 to 20 minutes to complete. Participants were asked to read the questions carefully and respond honestly based on their conditions to obtain more accurate findings. Ultimately, all responses were collected and examined using SPSS Version 29. The correlation test examines the dependency of one variable on another and is employed for quantitative analysis of responder data. The results demonstrate the robustness of the correlation between the variables.

Moreover, a correlation test was conducted to determine whether epistemic beliefs and writing anxiety are related in this study. The correlation coefficient is used to assess the closeness of the relationship between each variable. This study employed the Pearson Product Moment (r) Correlation Test to evaluate the strength of the association between the variables indicated by the correlation coefficient (r) utilizing SPSS Version 29. This test is appropriate to use in the study because it fits the purpose of the analysis, which is to explore the correlation between writing anxiety and epistemic beliefs of EFL students for several reasons; namely, it can measure a linear relationship, both variables in this study, writing anxiety and epistemic beliefs, are measured using interval or ratio scales, which is a prerequisite for using Pearson's test, and it is simple and easy to use. The correlation between the variables may be either positive or negative.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
Findings
EFL Students' Levels and Types of Writing Anxiety

This part presents the results of EFL students' levels and types of anxiety in writing. This study's findings addressed the research question, "What are the levels and types of EFL students' writing anxiety?" The degree of writing anxiety is divided into three, namely high-level anxiety, moderate-level anxiety, and low-level anxiety. The classification of this level comes from the data obtained from SLWAI, with total scores ranging from 21 to 105, while in this study, the scores obtained ranged from 21 to 95. The data results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Students' Level of Writing Anxiety

Writing Anxiety Level	N	Min. Score	Max. Score	Percentage	Mean
High Level	42	64	95	45.7%	72.71
Moderate Level	35	47	62	38%	55.69
Low Level	15	21	45	16.3%	36.13
Total	92				
Overall Mean					60.27

Based on the result, the entire average score is (Mean = 60.27 < 64). The results suggest that participants exhibit a moderate degree of writing anxiety. According to the calculation technique, the results indicated that 45.7% (N=42) of respondents exhibited high levels of anxiety, 38% (N=35) showed moderate levels of anxiety, and merely 16.3% (N=15) of respondents displayed low levels of anxiety in writing. Researchers conclude that the majority of students had elevated levels of anxiety in writing.

Furthermore, this part exposes the several types of anxiety one faces while learning a second language. Calculating the overall score of every item connected to every type of writing anxiety from SLWAI could assist in determining the most dominating type of anxiety. Among students, the most often prevalent type of writing anxiety is the one with the highest score. Table 2 below summarizes the findings of the analysis.

Table 2 Means' Types of Writing Anxiety

Types of Writing Anxiety	N	Total Score	Mean
Cognitive	92	2262	24.59
Somatic	92	1877	20.40
Avoidance-behavior	92	1406	15.28

According to the results presented in Table 2, cognitive anxiety exhibited the highest mean value (M= 24.59), followed by a lower mean value for somatic anxiety (M= 20.40), and avoidance behavior anxiety, which recorded the lowest mean value (M= 15.28). Consequently, it can be inferred that cognitive anxiety was the predominant form of anxiety.

EFL Students' Levels of Epistemic Beliefs

The second question is, "What are the levels of EFL students' epistemic beliefs?" Based on students' answers, the highest mean of each question was used to identify students' epistemic beliefs, and the total score of students' questionnaire findings was utilized to calculate their epistemic beliefs. Researchers have performed reverse scoring on items from the questionnaire that have negative wording before calculating the total score. Figure 3 illustrates the data about the level of epistemic beliefs.

Figure 3 EFL Students' Epistemic Beliefs Levels
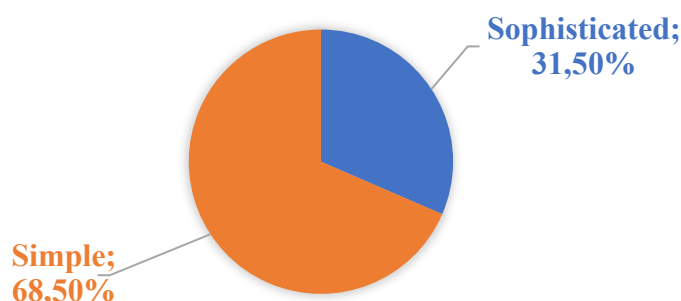
Based on Figure 3, it was found that out of 92 participants, 31.5% of participants have sophisticated epistemic beliefs, and 68.5% of participants have simple epistemic beliefs. This study found that 29 students had sophisticated epistemic beliefs, and 63 others had simple epistemic beliefs.

The Correlation Between Epistemic Beliefs and Writing Anxiety

The third question is, "Is there any correlation between writing anxiety and epistemic beliefs?" To answer this research question, researchers used SPSS Version 29 to perform the Pearson correlation test based on the following decision-making criteria: 1. If the significance value is <0.05, it indicates there is a correlation; 2. If the significance value is > 0.05, it indicates there is no correlation. The table below shows the degree of relationship:

Table 3 Guideline for the degree of relationship

Coefficient Interval	Degree of Relationship
0,00 – 0,199	Very weak
0,20 – 0,399	Weak
0,40 – 0,599	Moderate
0,60 – 0,799	Strong
0,80 – 1,000	Very Strong

After collecting the data, the data was then analyzed using SPSS. The results are shown in Figure 3 below:

Correlations

		Epistemic Beliefs	Writing Anxiety
Epistemic Beliefs	Pearson Correlation	1	-.271[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.009
	N	92	92
Writing Anxiety	Pearson Correlation	-.271[**]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.009	
	N	92	92

[**]. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The table above shows that the significance value of epistemic beliefs and writing anxiety is 0.009, which means 0.009 <0.05. It means that both have a relationship or correlation. In addition, the table shows that the correlation value of the epistemic beliefs and writing anxiety variables is -0.271. If referring to the guidelines for the degree of relationship, the results obtained are that the variables of epistemic beliefs and writing anxiety have a weak correlation, and the form of the relationship between these two variables is negative. The results of this study show that epistemic beliefs and writing anxiety have a relationship or correlation with a weak degree of correlation and a negative direction of the relationship. In this study, sophisticated epistemic beliefs (high achievers) had low scores with a score range of 10-17, while simple epistemic beliefs (low achievers) had high scores with a score range of 18-25. It is because 6 out of 7 items on the epistemic belief questionnaire have negative words and are scored in reverse before calculating the total score. Consequently, it can be inferred that the higher the level of epistemic beliefs owned by students, the higher the potential for writing anxiety.

To summarize the findings of this study, there are several findings regarding EFL students' levels and types of writing anxiety, EFL students' levels of epistemic beliefs, and the correlation between the two. The first finding is about EFL students' levels and types of writing anxiety. The results of this study showed that the overall mean scores indicated that the EFL student participants exhibited moderate levels of writing anxiety, with the majority experiencing high levels of writing anxiety. Then, the most dominant type of writing anxiety from the results of this study is cognitive anxiety, followed by somatic anxiety and avoidance behavior. Furthermore, the second finding is about EFL students' levels of writing anxiety. This study revealed that 63 out of 92 participants had simple epistemic beliefs (low achievers), and the others had sophisticated epistemic beliefs (high achievers). The last one is the correlation between the two. The results of this study showed a significant correlation between epistemic beliefs and writing anxiety, with a result indicating a weak correlation between the two variables. This means epistemic beliefs and writing anxiety correlate with a weak correlation. The weak correlation between epistemic beliefs and writing anxiety in EFL students indicates that the relationship between students' epistemic beliefs (how they view

knowledge and the learning process) and their anxiety level when writing in English as a foreign language is weak, which means that students' epistemic beliefs may only slightly affect their anxiety level in writing.

Discussion

The objective of this study was to determine the levels and categories of writing anxiety experienced by EFL students, as well as the correlation between epistemic beliefs and writing anxiety. The study's findings indicated that the participants experienced a moderate level of writing anxiety, with a mean score of 60.27. It was determined that 42 students exhibited high-level writing anxiety, 35 students manifested moderate-level writing anxiety, and 15 students experienced low-level writing anxiety. This investigation demonstrated that cognitive anxiety was the most prevalent anxiety among university students, with somatic anxiety and avoidance behavior anxiety closely following in that order. Cognitive anxiety incorporates the cognitive components of anxiety, such as negative expectations, an excessive emphasis on performance, and apprehensions about the perceptions of oneself by others (Wahyuni & Umam, 2017).

The study's findings corresponded with prior research, which also revealed that students encountered moderate levels of writing anxiety, with cognitive worry emerging as the primary cause, succeeded by somatic anxiety and avoidance-behavior anxiety (Quvanch & Na, 2022; Khairah & Fatimah, 2022; Afdalia et al., 2023). Nevertheless, prior research conducted in Pakistan found a different result. The result of that research revealed that somatic anxiety was the most prevalent form of anxiety, succeeded by avoidance behavior and somatic anxiety (Ajmal & Irfan, 2020). It can be concluded from several studies' findings that students' writing anxiety varies according to their social, cultural, geographical, and educational backgrounds. Nonetheless, this study revealed that Indonesian students experienced the highest degree of cognitive anxiety. Wern and Rahmat (2021) identified the primary reasons for writing anxiety as linguistic challenges, followed by insufficient writing techniques, apprehension regarding unfavorable feedback and evaluations, and time constraints.

The study revealed that among 92 participants, 31.5% possess sophisticated epistemic beliefs (N=29), whereas 68.5% exhibit simple epistemic beliefs (N=63). Emaliana (2017) categorizes epistemic beliefs into simple and sophisticated epistemic beliefs. Students with simplistic epistemic beliefs hold firm convictions that information is straightforward, innate, acquired instantaneously, and immutable, perceiving authority and experts as the primary sources of knowledge. Conversely, pupils with advanced epistemic views perceive knowledge as inherently fluid or provisional, acknowledge that individuals can learn independently from diverse sources, and assert that their acquired knowledge derives not from authority but from reasoning or experiential logic. Epistemological beliefs profoundly affect an individual's cognitive approach to knowledge, academic achievement, subject proficiency, and motivation, beginning to develop at the elementary school level (Demir & Sümer in Atasoy & Küçük, 2020).

The study's findings reveal a weak negative association between epistemic beliefs and writing anxiety. The study found that students with sophisticated epistemic, who were high achievers, obtained low scores within the range of 10-17. Conversely, individuals with simple epistemic beliefs, who were low achievers, obtained high scores within the range of 18-25. The reason for this is that 6 out of 7 items on the epistemic belief questionnaire contain negative terms and are assessed in a reversed manner before computing the overall score. Therefore, it might be concluded that students experiencing anxiety in writing rises with increasing epistemic beliefs level. The findings of this study are in line with the findings of previous studies, which state that there is a significant correlation between epistemic beliefs and writing anxiety (Heidarzadi et al., 2021; Heidarzadi et al., 2022; Homayouni & Abdulmanafirukni, 2024). However, the current findings with previous findings also have

differences where the results of this study show that epistemic beliefs and writing anxiety correlate, but with a weak degree of relationship.

Heidarzadi, Barjesteh, and Mouziraji (2021) conducted research in Iran, demonstrating a significant positive correlation between epistemic beliefs and writing anxiety. Their findings indicate that as students' epistemic beliefs increase, so does their writing anxiety, which can lead to heightened stress and diminished writing performance among those with strong epistemic beliefs. Furthermore, another study revealed a significant positive correlation between epistemic beliefs and second language writing anxiety, indicating that the epistemic beliefs of EFL learners can exacerbate their writing anxiety (Heidarzadi et al., 2022). Another study also revealed a significant positive correlation between epistemic beliefs and English writing anxiety and a significant negative correlation between the subscales of the language self-motivation system and English writing anxiety (Homayouni & Abdolmanafirukni, 2024). It can be concluded that elevated levels of learners' epistemic views on language acquisition correlate with increased writing anxiety in a second language (L2).

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTION

From this study, we can draw several conclusions. The findings showed that 92 participants had moderate levels of anxiety in writing, which was mostly dominated by cognitive anxiety, and afterward somatic anxiety and avoidance behavioral anxiety. Furthermore, most of them have simple epistemic beliefs in learning, in which case they see authority from the teacher as the source of knowledge since knowledge is simple and natural. Epistemic beliefs then can influence EFL students' writing anxiety; the results of this study show that there is a significant correlation between epistemic beliefs and writing anxiety, where the relationship between the two has a weak correlation. In short, students who have more sophisticated epistemic beliefs—that is, those who learn languages—had more anxiety when writing a second language.

This research's limitations include using only one university in Indonesia and a limited sample size. As a result, future researchers should investigate writing anxiety and epistemic beliefs in more colleges with a broader population to obtain a more accurate picture of them. In addition, the researcher carried out a quantitative investigation utilizing a series of questionnaires in this study. Because of that, future researchers should use qualitative data collection approaches to obtain more detailed information or use mixed methods. Furthermore, only a few studies revealed the relationship between epistemic beliefs and writing anxiety, allowing future researchers to expand and discover new findings linked to this topic while considering population size, knowledge, and cultural background. Finally, there are several implications of this study related to writing anxiety and epistemic beliefs of EFL students. This study can give implications on teaching practices such as strategies to reduce writing anxiety and increase students' epistemic beliefs, and future research can explore additional variables that affect writing anxiety, such as motivation, self-efficacy, or cultural context.

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