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THE CORRELATION BETWEEN STUDENTS' LEARNING AUTONOMY AND ENGLISH LEARNING ANXIETY ON THEIR ACADEMIC WRITING ACHIEVEMENT

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ABSTRACT

This study measures the correlation between students' learning autonomy and English learning anxiety and their academic writing achievement among undergraduate students of the English Study Program, Faculty of Education and Vocational Studies, Universitas Lancang Kuning. Although higher autonomy is generally associated with better academic performance and anxiety is believed to negatively affect writing results, inconsistent findings in EFL higher education contexts require further investigation. Therefore, this study aims to examine the partial and simultaneous correlations of learning autonomy and English learning anxiety with academic writing achievement. Using a quantitative correlational design with purposive sampling, the research involved 100 students. Data were collected through validated and reliable Likert-scale questionnaires and documented final scores from the Argumentative Writing course. The results showed that learning autonomy did not have a statistically significant correlation with academic writing achievement (Sig. = 0.680 > 0.05), while English learning anxiety showed a negative but statistically non-significant correlation (Sig. = 0.433 > 0.05). Furthermore, multiple regression analysis indicated that both independent variables simultaneously did not significantly predict academic writing achievement (Sig. F = 0.674 > 0.05), with an R Square value of 0.008. These findings suggest that other cognitive, linguistic, or instructional factors may have a stronger influence on students' academic writing performance and provide a basis for future research on writing skills in EFL contexts.

Keywords: Learning Autonomy; English Learning Anxiety; Academic Writing Achievement; Quantitative Correlation; Undergraduate Students

1. INTRODUCTION

Academic writing is widely recognized as a core competency for students in higher education, particularly in English Study Programs, as it reflects their ability to think critically, structure arguments logically, and communicate ideas using formal and evidence-based discourse (Hyland, 2016). Mastery of academic writing is essential not only for completing academic assignments but also for preparing students for future professional and research-related activities that require clarity, coherence, and precision. In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, academic writing is considered one of the most challenging language skills because it requires the integration of linguistic knowledge, critical thinking,

and organizational abilities. As a result, many students continue to experience difficulties in producing well-structured and coherent academic texts.

In the Indonesian higher education context, these challenges remain prominent among university students, including those enrolled in English Study Programs. Despite having studied English for several years, many students still struggle with organizing ideas cohesively, maintaining logical flow, applying accurate grammar, and selecting appropriate vocabulary (Faradhibah, 2017). These difficulties become more evident as students are required to complete more complex writing tasks, such as argumentative essays and research-based assignments. Such conditions indicate that academic writing achievement is not solely determined by language proficiency but is also influenced by various internal factors that shape students' learning processes and performance.

One of the internal factors that has been widely associated with successful language learning is learning autonomy. Learning autonomy refers to learners' ability to take responsibility for their own learning, including setting goals, selecting strategies, monitoring progress, and evaluating outcomes (Andriani & Sujarwati, 2025; Yildiz & Yucedal, 2020). Students with higher levels of autonomy tend to engage more actively in learning activities and demonstrate greater independence in improving their skills. In the context of academic writing, autonomous learners are more likely to revise their drafts independently, seek additional learning resources, and apply feedback effectively. They also tend to use metacognitive strategies that enable them to plan, monitor, and evaluate their writing processes, which contributes to improved writing performance (Ayish & Deveci, 2019; Marzuko et al., 2023).

In addition to cognitive and self-regulated learning factors, affective variables such as English learning anxiety also play a crucial role in shaping students' academic writing achievement. English learning anxiety, particularly writing anxiety, refers to feelings of tension, worry, and nervousness that arise when students are required to perform language-related tasks (Tzoannopoulou, 2016). In academic writing contexts, anxiety often emerges due to fear of making grammatical mistakes, limited vocabulary, and concern about negative evaluation. These emotional responses can interfere with students' cognitive processing, making it more difficult for them to generate ideas, organize their thoughts, and express their arguments effectively (Ariyanti, 2017; Yan, 2024). Consequently, students who experience higher levels of anxiety may produce lower-quality writing and demonstrate reduced confidence in their academic abilities.

Although learning autonomy is often considered a factor that can enhance students' academic performance and potentially reduce anxiety, the relationship between learning autonomy, English learning anxiety, and academic writing achievement is not always consistent. Some studies suggest that autonomous learners are better able to regulate their emotions and cope with anxiety, leading to improved learning outcomes (Hamied & Emilia, 2017). However, other studies indicate that the interaction between these variables is more complex and influenced by various contextual and individual factors. This suggests that high levels of autonomy do not necessarily guarantee reduced anxiety or better academic writing performance, and that these variables may interact in dynamic ways.

In the context of Universitas Lancang Kuning, particularly in the English Study Program, empirical studies examining the combined influence of learning autonomy and English learning anxiety on academic writing achievement remain limited. Existing research in Indonesia has often focused on general language skills or examined these variables separately, rather than exploring their simultaneous relationship in the context of academic writing (Romadhoni et al., 2023). As a result, there is still a lack of comprehensive understanding of how these factors jointly influence students' writing performance, especially in courses that require higher-order thinking and structured academic writing.

Preliminary observations further highlight this issue. Based on informal interviews with a writing lecturer, it was found that many students still demonstrate low levels of learning autonomy in academic writing classes. Although some students are capable of planning and revising their writing independently, a considerable number continue to depend heavily on lecturer guidance. They tend to wait for explicit feedback before making revisions and show limited initiative in improving their writing through independent practice or self-evaluation. This indicates that students' self-regulated learning skills in academic writing have not yet been fully developed.

In addition, English learning anxiety is frequently observed among students when completing academic writing tasks. Many students feel anxious when required to produce structured academic texts, particularly argumentative or research-based writing. This anxiety is often reflected in hesitation to start writing, fear of making mistakes, and excessive concern about grades and evaluation. As a result, students tend to focus more on avoiding errors rather than developing ideas, which negatively affects the coherence and quality of their writing.

Students' perspectives also support these findings. Some students perceive academic writing as one of the most difficult skills in the English Study Program due to strict academic conventions and high expectations from lecturers. They often experience anxiety at the beginning of writing tasks, especially when they are uncertain about structure, vocabulary, and academic standards. However, students who demonstrate higher levels of learning autonomy report that they are better able to manage their anxiety by planning their writing process, seeking references independently, and revising their work systematically. This indicates that learning autonomy and English learning anxiety coexist and may jointly influence students' academic writing achievement.

Based on these theoretical considerations and empirical observations, it is evident that learning autonomy and English learning anxiety are important factors that may influence students' academic writing performance. However, the extent to which these variables are related to academic writing achievement, both individually and simultaneously, remains unclear. Therefore, this study aims to examine the correlation between learning autonomy, English learning anxiety, and academic writing achievement among students of the English Study Program at Universitas Lancang Kuning.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative correlational research design to examine the relationship between learning autonomy, English learning anxiety, and students' academic writing achievement. A correlational approach was considered appropriate because the study aimed to measure the degree of association among variables without manipulating them. This design allows the researcher to investigate relationships among variables in their natural setting.

In addition, this study adopted an ex post facto approach, as the variables investigated already existed and could not be controlled or manipulated by the researcher. Learning autonomy and English learning anxiety are psychological constructs inherent in students, while academic writing achievement represents outcomes that have already been obtained through coursework. Therefore, this approach enables the researcher to examine how the independent variables relate to the dependent variable in a real educational context.

The population of this study consisted of all undergraduate students of the English Study Program in the Faculty of Education and Vocational Studies at Universitas Lancang Kuning during the 2025/2026 academic year. These students were selected because they are required to take academic writing courses as part of their curriculum, making them relevant for investigating academic writing achievement. The total population consisted of 118 students from three different semesters, namely semester three, semester five, and semester seven.

The sample was selected using purposive sampling, which allows the researcher to choose participants based on specific criteria relevant to the study. The criteria included students who were actively enrolled in academic writing-related courses and had completed sufficient writing tasks, particularly in the Argumentative Writing course. Based on these criteria, 100 students were selected as the research sample. This sample size is considered adequate for correlational and regression analysis.

This study involved two independent variables, namely learning autonomy (X_1) and English learning anxiety (X_2), and one dependent variable, academic writing achievement (Y). Learning autonomy refers to students' ability to manage and regulate their own learning process, including planning, monitoring, and evaluating their learning activities. English learning anxiety refers to students' feelings of tension, worry, and nervousness when learning or using English, particularly in academic writing contexts. Academic writing achievement refers to students' performance in academic writing tasks, which was measured using their final scores in the Argumentative Writing course.

Data were collected using questionnaires and documentation. The questionnaires were used to measure learning autonomy and English learning anxiety. The instruments consisted of 25 items for each variable and were measured using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The items were developed and adapted from established theoretical frameworks related to learner autonomy and language anxiety. Prior to data collection, the instruments were tested for validity and reliability. Content validity was evaluated through expert judgment, while construct validity and reliability were analyzed statistically using item analysis and Cronbach's Alpha. Only valid and reliable items were retained for data collection.

Data for academic writing achievement were obtained through documentation in the form of students' final scores in the Argumentative Writing course. These scores were assigned by the course lecturer using a standardized scoring rubric that assesses organization, coherence, grammatical accuracy, content development, and the use of academic references. This approach ensures that the data reflect students' actual performance rather than self-reported perceptions.

The data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the data, including mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum scores, and frequency distribution. This analysis provides an overview of students' levels of learning autonomy, English learning anxiety, and academic writing achievement. Before conducting inferential analysis, several assumption tests were performed to ensure that the data met the requirements for multiple regression analysis. These tests included normality, linearity, multicollinearity, and homoscedasticity tests. Ensuring that these assumptions are met is essential for obtaining valid and reliable results.

Inferential statistics were conducted using multiple regression analysis to examine the influence of learning autonomy and English learning anxiety on academic writing achievement. This analysis allows the researcher to examine both the partial effects of each independent variable and their simultaneous effect on the dependent variable. The level of significance was set at 0.05, meaning that a significance value greater than 0.05 indicates that the result is not statistically significant.

In addition, the t-test was used to examine the individual contribution of each independent variable, while the F-test was used to examine the simultaneous effect of both variables on academic writing achievement.

3. RESULTS

The findings of this study are presented based on the results of statistical analyses conducted to examine the relationships between learning autonomy, English learning anxiety, and students' academic writing achievement. The analysis includes descriptive statistics as well as inferential statistics to provide a comprehensive overview of the data. Based on the descriptive analysis, the data indicate that students demonstrate varying levels of learning autonomy. Some students show relatively high levels of independence in managing their learning activities, such as planning their study schedules, monitoring their progress, and evaluating their learning outcomes. However, other students still tend to rely on external guidance, particularly from lecturers, when completing academic writing tasks. This variation suggests that students have different levels of readiness in taking responsibility for their own learning process.

In terms of English learning anxiety, the descriptive results show that students experience different levels of emotional responses when engaging in academic writing tasks. Some students report low levels of anxiety, indicating that they feel relatively comfortable when writing in English. On the other hand, some students experience moderate levels of anxiety, especially when they are required to produce structured academic texts such as argumentative essays. This variation reflects differences in students' confidence, language proficiency, and prior writing experience.

The analysis of academic writing achievement shows that students' performance also varies. Some students achieve relatively high scores in the Argumentative Writing course, indicating a good ability to organize ideas, use appropriate vocabulary, and apply grammatical structures effectively. However, other students obtain lower scores, which may reflect difficulties in developing ideas, maintaining coherence, and using accurate language forms. This variation suggests that students' writing achievement is influenced by multiple factors.

The first inferential analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between learning autonomy and academic writing achievement. The result shows that the significance value is 0.680, which is higher than the level of significance set at 0.05. This indicates that there is no statistically significant correlation between learning autonomy and students' academic writing achievement. Although some students demonstrate higher levels of autonomy, this does not necessarily correspond to higher writing scores. Similarly, students with lower levels of autonomy do not always show lower writing performance.

The second analysis examined the relationship between English learning anxiety and academic writing achievement. The result reveals that the significance value is 0.433, which is also higher than 0.05. This indicates that English learning anxiety does not have a statistically significant correlation with students' academic writing achievement. Although the direction of the relationship tends to be negative, meaning that higher anxiety is associated with lower performance, the relationship is not strong enough to be considered statistically significant.

Furthermore, the simultaneous analysis using multiple regression was conducted to determine the combined effect of learning autonomy and English learning anxiety on academic writing achievement. The result shows that the significance value of the regression model is 0.674, which is greater than 0.05. This indicates that learning autonomy and English learning anxiety, when considered together, do not have a statistically significant influence on students' academic writing achievement.

In addition, the R Square value obtained from the regression analysis is 0.008, which means that only 0.8% of the variance in students' academic writing achievement can be explained by learning autonomy and English learning anxiety. This very small percentage indicates that the contribution of the two independent variables is minimal, while the remaining 99.2% of the variance is influenced by other factors that were not included in this study.

The results of the analysis also show that the relationships between the variables are relatively weak. There is no clear pattern indicating that higher learning autonomy consistently leads to better writing performance. Similarly, there is no strong evidence that higher levels of anxiety consistently result in lower writing achievement. This suggests that the relationship between these variables is not linear or direct.

These findings confirm that neither learning autonomy nor English learning anxiety, both individually and simultaneously, have a statistically significant relationship with students' academic writing achievement in this research context. The results also indicate that academic writing achievement is likely influenced by a wider range of factors beyond the variables examined in this study.

4. DISCUSSION

This study aimed to examine the correlation between Learning Autonomy (X_1), English Learning Anxiety (X_2), and Academic Writing Achievement (Y) among students of the English Study Program at Universitas Lancang Kuning. Based on the statistical analysis, the findings revealed that neither Learning Autonomy nor English Learning Anxiety had a statistically significant correlation with students' Academic Writing Achievement, both partially and simultaneously. These results indicate that the two independent variables, individually and collectively, do not significantly predict students' performance in academic writing within the context of this study.

The first finding showed that Learning Autonomy did not significantly correlate with Academic Writing Achievement. Theoretically, learner autonomy is often associated with higher academic performance because autonomous learners tend to demonstrate self regulation, goal setting behavior, self monitoring, and independent learning practices. According to Holec (1991), learner autonomy refers to the ability of learners to take responsibility for their own learning, including determining learning objectives, selecting appropriate strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes. Similarly, Benson (2001) emphasizes that autonomy encourages learners to actively manage their learning process, which can potentially support language development. However, the absence of a significant relationship in this study suggests that general autonomous learning behavior may not directly translate into measurable improvement in academic writing performance. Academic writing is a complex and specialized skill that requires not only independence in learning but also mastery of linguistic structures, rhetorical organization, coherence, cohesion, and familiarity with academic conventions. Therefore, writing achievement may depend more strongly on technical competence and structured instructional support rather than on general autonomy traits.

The second finding indicated that English Learning Anxiety did not significantly correlate with Academic Writing Achievement. Language anxiety has long been recognized as a factor that may influence language learning performance. Horwitz et. al (1986) explains that foreign language anxiety can interfere with learners' cognitive processing and reduce their ability to perform effectively in language learning situations. Many previous studies have reported that high levels of anxiety negatively affect language performance, particularly in speaking activities where learners must respond immediately and communicate in front of others. However, the present study found no significant relationship between English Learning Anxiety and students' academic writing performance. One possible explanation is that writing differs from other language skills such as speaking because it allows learners more time to plan, revise, and edit their ideas before submitting their work. The process oriented nature of writing may reduce the immediate psychological pressure associated with anxiety, allowing students to manage their emotional state more effectively during writing tasks.

The simultaneous analysis further confirmed that Learning Autonomy and English Learning Anxiety together did not significantly correlate with Academic Writing Achievement. This finding suggests that the combined influence of cognitive self regulation and affective factors was insufficient to explain variations in students' writing scores.

Academic writing achievement may instead be influenced by other factors that were not examined in this study, such as grammar mastery, vocabulary knowledge, frequency of writing practice, feedback from lecturers, instructional strategies, and students' exposure to academic texts. These factors may play a more direct role in shaping students' writing performance.

Conceptually, these findings highlight the distinction between general learner characteristics and skill specific outcomes. Learning autonomy represents a general learning disposition, while English learning anxiety reflects an emotional response to language learning situations. Academic writing, however, is a domain specific competence that requires explicit instruction, genre awareness, critical thinking, and continuous practice. The absence of significant correlations found in this study suggests that psychological readiness alone does not automatically lead to strong writing performance. Students' ability to organize arguments, develop ideas, and apply grammatical accuracy in academic texts may depend more heavily on linguistic competence and instructional guidance.

This study also presents several strengths. First, the research focuses specifically on Academic Writing Achievement rather than general English proficiency, allowing a more precise examination of a productive language skill that is essential in academic contexts. Second, the study contributes empirical evidence within the Indonesian EFL context, particularly at Universitas Lancang Kuning, where limited studies have investigated the relationship between learning autonomy, language anxiety, and writing performance simultaneously. By examining both cognitive and affective variables together, this research provides a broader perspective on factors that may influence academic writing performance among university students.

Despite these contributions, several limitations should be acknowledged. The sample of this study was limited to students from one study program, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to other educational contexts or institutions. In addition, the measurement of Learning Autonomy and English Learning Anxiety relied on self reported questionnaires, which may introduce subjectivity and response bias because students' perceptions do not always accurately represent their actual learning behaviors or emotional experiences. Furthermore, the cross sectional research design only captures relationships at a single point in time and therefore does not allow causal interpretations. Academic Writing Achievement in this study was measured using institutional assessment scores, which may reflect specific grading criteria rather than a comprehensive evaluation of students' overall writing competence.

In conclusion, the results of this study indicate that Learning Autonomy and English Learning Anxiety do not have a significant relationship with Academic Writing Achievement, either partially or simultaneously. This suggests that students' academic writing ability is not solely determined by their level of learning independence or anxiety in learning English, but is more likely influenced by other more specific factors, such as grammar mastery, vocabulary knowledge, and understanding of academic writing structures and conventions. Therefore, efforts to improve students' academic writing skills should focus on the development of these specific language competencies supported by systematic instructional processes. However,

considering the limitations of this study, the findings should be interpreted with caution and may serve as a reference for further research in the future.

5. CONCLUSION

This study examined whether learning autonomy and English learning anxiety correlate with students' academic writing achievement at the English Study Program of Universitas Lancang Kuning. The statistical findings indicate that neither variable shows a significant relationship with writing performance, both individually and simultaneously.

The first finding demonstrates that learning autonomy does not significantly correlate with academic writing achievement (Sig. = 0.680 > 0.05). Although autonomy is theoretically linked to better academic outcomes through self regulated learning, independent practice, and goal setting, the present findings suggest that these general learning behaviors do not automatically translate into higher writing scores. Academic writing appears to require more specific competencies, such as grammar control, vocabulary range, organization of ideas, and familiarity with academic conventions. In this context, being autonomous is not sufficient unless it is directly applied to structured writing development.

The second finding shows that English learning anxiety has a negative but non-significant correlation with academic writing achievement (Sig. = 0.433 > 0.05). While anxiety is often assumed to hinder performance by reducing confidence and increasing cognitive pressure, its effect may depend on the type of language skill involved. Writing allows time for planning, revising, and editing, which may reduce the immediate impact of anxiety. This suggests that emotional factors may play a less dominant role in writing compared to more spontaneous skills such as speaking.

The simultaneous analysis further confirms that learning autonomy and English learning anxiety together do not significantly correlate with academic writing achievement (Sig. F = 0.674 > 0.05). The R Square value of 0.008 indicates that both variables explain only 0.8% of the variance in writing scores. This extremely small contribution highlights that these psychological factors are not strong predictors of academic writing performance among the participants.

Overall, the findings imply that academic writing achievement in this context is likely influenced more by linguistic and instructional factors than by general psychological characteristics. Elements such as grammar mastery, vocabulary knowledge, writing practice intensity, quality of feedback, and instructional design may play a more substantial role in shaping students' writing outcomes.

From an interpretative perspective, this study suggests that psychological readiness alone does not guarantee technical proficiency in academic writing. Writing is a structured and skill specific competence that requires explicit training and consistent practice. Therefore, while autonomy and anxiety remain important aspects of language learning, their direct contribution to writing achievement appears limited within the scope of this research.

In terms of implications, these findings encourage a stronger focus on skill based writing instruction rather than relying solely on fostering autonomous learning attitudes or reducing anxiety levels. Educators may need to prioritize structured writing guidance, targeted feedback, and intensive practice to improve students' academic writing

performance. At the same time, future research should consider examining additional variables that more directly relate to writing competence in order to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing academic writing achievement.

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