

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

THESIS

**Submitted to Fulfill
One of the Requirements
to Obtain a Degree of *Sarjana Pendidikan (S.Pd)***



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ABSTRACT

Palensiska Br Hutagaol, 2025: The Correlation Between Students' Learning Autonomy and English Learning Anxiety on Their Academic Writing Achievement

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 measuring learning autonomy and English learning anxiety, along with documented final scores from the Argumentative Writing course as indicators of academic writing achievement. The results show that learning autonomy does not have a statistically significant correlation with academic writing achievement ($\text{Sig.} = 0.680 > 0.05$), while English learning anxiety has a negative but statistically non-significant correlation ($\text{Sig.} = 0.433 > 0.05$). Furthermore, multiple regression analysis indicates that both independent variables simultaneously do not significantly predict academic writing achievement ($\text{Sig. } F = 0.674 > 0.05$), with an R Square value of 0.008, explaining only 0.8% of the variance. These findings suggest that other cognitive, linguistic, or instructional factors may have a stronger influence on students' academic writing performance.

Keywords: learning autonomy, English learning anxiety, academic writing achievement

ABSTRAK

Palensiska Br Hutagaol, 2025:

Hubungan antara Kemandirian Belajar dan Kecemasan Belajar Bahasa Inggris terhadap Pencapaian Menulis Akademik Mahasiswa .

Penelitian ini mengukur hubungan antara learning autonomy dan English learning anxiety dengan capaian academic writing mahasiswa Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, Fakultas Pendidikan dan Vokasi, Universitas Lancang Kuning. Meskipun kemandirian belajar yang tinggi umumnya dikaitkan dengan performa akademik yang lebih baik dan kecemasan diyakini dapat berdampak negatif terhadap hasil menulis, temuan yang tidak konsisten dalam konteks pendidikan tinggi EFL menunjukkan perlunya penelitian lebih lanjut. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui hubungan secara parsial dan simultan antara learning autonomy dan English learning anxiety terhadap capaian academic writing. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain kuantitatif korelasional dengan teknik purposive sampling yang melibatkan 100 mahasiswa. Data dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner skala Likert yang telah teruji validitas dan reliabilitasnya untuk mengukur learning autonomy dan English learning anxiety, serta dokumentasi nilai akhir mata kuliah Argumentative Writing sebagai indikator capaian academic writing. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa learning autonomy tidak memiliki hubungan yang signifikan secara statistik dengan capaian academic writing ($\text{Sig.} = 0,680 > 0,05$), sedangkan English learning anxiety memiliki hubungan negatif namun tidak signifikan ($\text{Sig.} = 0,433 > 0,05$). Selain itu, hasil analisis regresi berganda menunjukkan bahwa kedua variabel independen secara simultan tidak berpengaruh signifikan terhadap capaian academic writing ($\text{Sig. } F = 0,674 > 0,05$), dengan nilai R Square sebesar 0,008 yang berarti hanya menjelaskan 0,8% variasi capaian academic writing. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa faktor lain, seperti faktor kognitif, linguistik, atau kualitas pembelajaran, kemungkinan memiliki pengaruh yang lebih kuat terhadap performa academic writing mahasiswa.

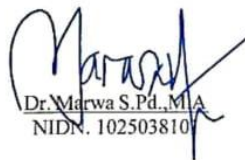
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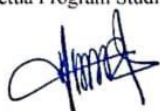
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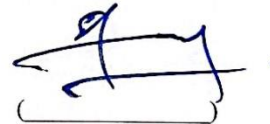
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PERNYATAAN KEASLIAN PENULISAN

Dengan ini saya menyatakan bahwa:

- a) Skripsi ini berjudul *The Correlation between Students' Learning Autonomy and English Learning Anxiety on Their Academic Writing Achievement* adalah karya saya sendiri dan belum pernah diajukan untuk memperoleh gelar Sarjana Pendidikan (S.Pd) pada Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, Fakultas Pendidikan dan Vokasi, Universitas Lancang Kuning, maupun di perguruan tinggi lain.
- b) Skripsi ini tidak mengandung karya atau pendapat yang telah ditulis atau dipublikasikan oleh orang lain, kecuali yang secara tertulis dicantumkan sebagai kutipan dengan jelas dan disebutkan sumbernya sesuai dengan kaidah penulisan ilmiah serta dicantumkan dalam daftar pustaka.

Demikian pernyataan ini saya buat dengan sebenar-benarnya. Apabila di kemudian hari ditemukan adanya penyimpangan atau ketidak benaran dalam pernyataan ini, saya bersedia menerima sanksi akademik berupa pencabutan gelar yang telah saya peroleh serta sanksi lainnya sesuai dengan peraturan dan ketentuan hukum yang berlaku.

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Finally, the researcher expects this thesis to be beneficial for readers and future researchers.

Pekanbaru, 19 February 2026
The Researcher



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CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Academic writing is widely recognized as a core competency for students in the English Study Program because it reflects their ability to think critically, structure arguments, and communicate ideas using formal, evidence-based discourse. Mastery of academic writing is essential not only for completing university assignments but also for preparing students for future professional and research-related tasks that require clarity, coherence, and precision. Despite its central role in higher education, many students still find academic writing challenging. They often struggle with organizing ideas cohesively, maintaining logical flow, applying accurate grammar, and selecting appropriate vocabulary. Studies have documented that these difficulties frequently emerge as students progress through increasingly complex writing tasks, indicating persistent gaps in their writing proficiency (Faradhibah, 2017). These ongoing challenges suggest that understanding the internal factors influencing academic writing performance is crucial for improving learning outcomes.

One of the internal factors consistently linked to language learning success is learning autonomy. Learning autonomy refers to the extent to which learners actively take control of their own learning processes, including setting goals, selecting strategies, monitoring progress, and evaluating outcomes. Research has demonstrated that students with higher levels of autonomy tend to achieve better results in language learning because they engage in self directed practices that support continuous improvement (Andriani & Sujarwati, 2025; Marzuko et al., 2023). Within the context of academic writing, autonomous learners typically show greater initiative, such as seeking additional resources, revising their drafts independently, and applying feedback more effectively. They are also more likely to use metacognitive strategies, which help them plan their writing, identify weaknesses, and refine their texts systematically (Ayish & Deveci, 2019). These characteristics contribute to the development of stronger academic writing abilities,

as supported by findings showing that self-directed learning positively influences writing performance (Maryam et al., 2025; Sari & Permana, 2025).

In addition to learning autonomy, affective variables such as English learning anxiety play a significant role in shaping students' writing outcomes. English learning anxiety, particularly writing anxiety, has been widely identified as a psychological barrier that interferes with students' performance. Students who experience high levels of anxiety often find it difficult to generate ideas, structure their writing, or concentrate during writing tasks. They may also experience fear of negative evaluation, worry about making linguistic errors, and lack confidence in their writing abilities. Such emotional responses can inhibit cognitive processing and ultimately reduce the quality of students' written work (Ariyanti, 2017; Fitrinada et al., 2012; Kabigting et al., 2000). Recent studies further confirm that anxiety not only disrupts writing performance but also affects overall academic achievement by limiting students' engagement and persistence in learning activities (Yan, 2024). These findings underscore the importance of addressing anxiety as a key factor influencing academic writing achievement.

Although learning autonomy is often proposed as a potential buffer that helps students manage anxiety more effectively, the interaction between these variables is not straightforward. Some scholars argue that autonomous learners tend to regulate their emotions better because they possess stronger self-management skills and coping strategies (Hamied & Emilia, 2017). They may be more capable of overcoming anxiety by relying on self-selected learning approaches and maintaining intrinsic motivation. However, other studies suggest that the relationship between autonomy, anxiety, and academic writing achievement is influenced by multiple contextual and individual factors, making it more complex than initially assumed. This complexity indicates that simply having high autonomy does not guarantee reduced anxiety or improved writing achievement, and that these variables may influence one another in dynamic and multifaceted ways.

Within the Indonesian higher education context, particularly at the Faculty of Education and Vocational Studies of Universitas Lancang Kuning, empirical

studies examining the combined effects of learning autonomy and English learning anxiety on academic writing achievement remain scarce. Research conducted in Indonesia has largely emphasized general language proficiency, speaking skills, or individual psychological variables, while the interaction between learning autonomy and English learning anxiety in relation to academic writing achievement has received limited scholarly attention (Romadhoni et al., 2023) . Consequently, the way these two variables simultaneously influence students' academic writing performance, especially among English Study Program students who are required to produce analytical and research-based academic texts, has not been sufficiently explored.

Evidence from preliminary interviews further highlights this condition. A writing lecturer at Universitas Lancang Kuning reported that many students still demonstrate low levels of learning autonomy in academic writing classes. Although some students are able to plan and revise their writing independently, a considerable number continue to depend heavily on detailed instructions and direct feedback from the lecturer. Students often wait for explicit correction before revising their work and show limited initiative in improving their writing through independent reading, additional practice, or self evaluation. These observations suggest that learning autonomy in academic writing has not yet been optimally developed, underscoring the importance of examining factors that influence students' academic writing achievement.

The lecturer also reported that English learning anxiety is a recurring issue in writing courses. Many students experience anxiety when required to produce academic texts, especially research based or argumentative writing. This anxiety is commonly reflected in hesitation to start writing, fear of making grammatical mistakes, and excessive concern about grades and evaluation. As a result, anxious students tend to prioritize error avoidance over idea development, which negatively affects the coherence, depth, and overall quality of their writing. The lecturer further noted that students with lower learning autonomy often exhibit higher anxiety levels, as they lack confidence in managing writing tasks independently.

Similarly, the interviewed student expressed that academic writing is perceived as one of the most challenging skills in the English Study Program due to strict academic conventions, complex grammar, and high expectations from lecturers. The student admitted experiencing anxiety at the beginning of writing tasks, particularly when unsure about structure, vocabulary choice, and academic standards. However, the student also acknowledged that developing learning autonomy such as planning writing stages, searching for references independently, and revising drafts gradually helped reduce anxiety and increase confidence. This student perspective illustrates how learning autonomy and English learning anxiety coexist and jointly influence academic writing achievement.

Based on both theoretical perspectives and real classroom conditions, it is evident that learning autonomy and English learning anxiety are closely related and play a significant role in shaping students' academic writing performance. Therefore, conducting a study that examines the influence of students' learning autonomy and English learning anxiety on their academic writing achievement in the English Study Program at Universitas Lancang Kuning is essential. Such an investigation will provide a clearer understanding of how cognitive, affective, and self-regulatory factors jointly shape students' writing competencies. The findings are expected to offer valuable insights for lecturers in designing more targeted instructional strategies, interventions, and support systems that enhance students' academic writing performance and foster more effective learning environments in EFL higher education settings.

B. Problem Identification

Preliminary observations and findings from previous studies indicate several issues related to students' academic writing performance in the English Study Program. Many students continue to experience difficulties in producing academic texts that meet standard English writing conventions, particularly in terms of coherence, organization, and accurate language use, challenges that have been widely reported in studies on EFL learners' writing difficulties (Hyland, 2016;

Faradhibah, 2017). In addition to linguistic challenges, students' academic writing performance is also associated with limited learning autonomy. Insufficient self-regulation and a lack of initiative in planning, monitoring, and evaluating learning activities have been found to hinder the development of academic writing skills (Andriani & Sujarwati, 2025). These difficulties are further exacerbated by English learning anxiety, especially writing anxiety, which negatively affects idea generation, confidence, and overall writing quality, as reported in both international and Indonesian EFL contexts (Diah Astriyanti et al., 2023; Fitrinada et al., 2012).

Despite the interrelated nature of academic writing performance, learning autonomy, and English learning anxiety, empirical studies conducted at Universitas Lancang Kuning that examine the combined influence of learning autonomy and English learning anxiety on students' academic writing achievement remain scarce. Existing studies tend to investigate these variables separately or focus primarily on general language skills rather than academic writing achievement (Mall-Amiri 2024; Romadhoni et al., 2023). Consistent with this situation, preliminary interviews with a writing lecturer and a student from the English Study Program at Universitas Lancang Kuning reveal that many students demonstrate low levels of learning autonomy and experience anxiety when completing academic writing tasks, particularly those requiring critical analysis and research-based writing. Academic writing is often perceived as difficult and stressful due to strict academic standards, fear of making mistakes, and limited confidence in managing writing tasks independently.

C. Research Question

Based on the problem identification, this study addresses the following questions:

1. Is there a significant correlation between students' learning autonomy and their academic writing achievement?
2. Is there a significant correlation between students' English learning anxiety and their writing achievement ?

3. Is there a significant simultaneous correlation between students' learning autonomy and their learning anxiety toward their academic writing achievement ?

D. Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are:

1. To analyze the correlation between learning autonomy and students' academic writing achievement.
2. To analyze the correlation between English learning anxiety and students' academic writing achievement.
3. To analyze the simultaneous correlation between learning autonomy and English learning anxiety which students' academic writing achievement.

E. Research Significance

This study is expected to provide both theoretical and practical contributions to the field of English language education.

a. Theoretical Significance

The findings of this study are expected to enrich the understanding of the relationship between learning autonomy, anxiety, and academic writing achievement in the EFL context. It may serve as a reference for future researchers who are interested in exploring how learning autonomy and anxiety influence students' academic writing performance. Moreover, the study contributes to the growing body of research on effective strategies for enhancing EFL students' academic writing skills.

b. Practical Significance

Practically, the results of this study can be beneficial for several stakeholders.

- a. For students: The study can help them understand the importance of self-regulated learning and managing anxiety to improve their academic writing.

- b. For lecturers: The findings may provide a basis for designing more effective teaching strategies in academic writing courses.
- c. For the institution: The study can offer insights for developing academic support programs for students at Universitas Lancang Kuning.

F. Scope of the Study

1. Subjects of the study: The subjects of this study are active undergraduate students of the English Study Program, Faculty of Education and Vocational Studies, Universitas Lancang Kuning.
2. Independent variables: The independent variables of this study are learning autonomy and English learning anxiety.
3. Dependent variable: The dependent variable is students' academic writing achievement, which is operationalized using the final scores obtained in the Argumentative Writing course. This course represents advanced academic writing competence in the English Study Program and is assessed using a standardized scoring rubric applied by the course lecturer throughout the semester
4. Research design: This study employs a quantitative correlational research design to examine the relationship and influence among the variables.

G. Definition of Key Terms

To avoid ambiguity and ensure clarity in interpreting the variables used in this study, the following operational definitions are provided:

1. Learning Autonomy

Learning autonomy in this study is students' ability to independently manage, regulate, and evaluate their own English learning processes. This includes setting learning goals, selecting appropriate strategies, monitoring progress, and reflecting on outcomes. Learning autonomy is measured through students' self

reported behaviors and attitudes related to self-directed learning in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL).

2. English Learning Anxiety

English learning anxiety in this study **is** the feelings of tension, worry, nervousness, or fear that students experience when learning English, particularly during academic writing activities. This construct includes psychological, emotional, and physiological responses that hinder performance, such as fear of making mistakes, concern about evaluation, and discomfort during writing tasks. The level of anxiety is measured using an anxiety scale adapted to the academic writing context.

3. Academic Writing Achievement

Academic writing achievement in this study is the measurable level of students' success in completing academic writing tasks based on established academic English criteria. This achievement is operationalized through students' final scores in the Argumentative Writing course in the English Study Program.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

A. 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 ($\text{Sig.} = 0.680 > 0.05$). 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 ($\text{Sig.} = 0.433 > 0.05$). 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 ($\text{Sig. } F = 0.674 > 0.05$). 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.

B. Suggestion

Based on the limitations of this study, several suggestions are proposed for future researchers.

First, since this study involved a limited sample from a single study program, future researchers are encouraged to include larger and more diverse samples from different institutions, study programs, or educational levels. This is

important to improve the generalizability of the findings and to obtain a broader understanding of the relationships among the variables.

Second, as the measurement of Learning Autonomy and English Learning Anxiety relied on self reported questionnaires, which may introduce subjectivity and response bias, future researchers are recommended to employ more varied data collection methods. For example, combining questionnaires with interviews, classroom observations, or analysis of students' actual writing practices may provide more accurate and comprehensive data regarding students' learning behaviors and emotional conditions.

Third, due to the use of a cross-sectional research design, which only captures data at a single point in time, future researchers are suggested to apply longitudinal research designs. Such approaches may allow researchers to examine changes and developments over time and provide a clearer understanding of potential causal relationships among the variables.

Fourth, considering that Academic Writing Achievement in this study was measured using institutional assessment scores, which may not fully represent students' overall writing competence, future researchers are encouraged to use more comprehensive assessment methods. These may include writing portfolios, multiple writing tasks, or rubric-based evaluations that assess various aspects of writing, such as organization, coherence, grammar, and critical thinking.

Finally, future researchers are also recommended to explore additional variables that may have a more direct influence on academic writing achievement, such as grammar mastery, vocabulary knowledge, writing practice frequency, feedback quality, and instructional strategies, in order to gain a more complete understanding of the factors affecting students' writing performance.

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