

**INDONESIAN EFL STUDENTS' ANXIETY IN WRITING FINAL PAPERS  
IN THE UNISKA-KEDIRI ENGLISH EDUCATION DEPARTMENT:  
FACTORS AND STRATEGIES**

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**Abstract**

*This article delves into the phenomenon of thesis-related anxiety among eighth-semester students at Kadiri Islamic University in Indonesia. It highlights anxiety as a notable psychological barrier that impedes effective thesis writing. The research investigates the factors contributing to this anxiety, including fear of negative evaluation, time pressure, language difficulties, and more. The research methodology encompasses a descriptive quantitative approach involving various stages, such as preliminary research, instrument development, validation, data collection, analysis, and conclusion. Through questionnaires and data analysis, the most prevalent anxiety factors are identified. Furthermore, the article explores the strategies students employ to mitigate thesis-related anxiety. The study identifies preparation, relaxation, positive thinking, and resignation as the main coping mechanisms. By analyzing the scores of the questionnaire responses, the article reveals the most commonly adopted strategies. Notably, preparation emerges as the primary strategy, followed by resignation, positive thinking, peer seeking, and relaxation. This article contributes to the understanding of the emotional and psychological aspects of academic writing and provides valuable information for educators and institutions seeking to support students during this critical phase of their academic journey.*

**Keywords:** *Writing, thesis, anxiety, strategy, EFL*

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## **A. INTRODUCTION**

This research emphasizes the continued importance of writing a thesis for graduation in certain universities, as per the rule by the Director General of Research and Higher Education. The term "thesis" in Indonesia refers to compulsory scientific work done by students to fulfill academic requirements. Writing a thesis is distinct from other assignments and involves individual effort. Students often encounter difficulties due to linguistic, psychological, and sociocultural factors. One of the kinds of the psychological factor is anxiety. Anxiety, a key psychological factor, affects students and is characterized by negative emotions and physical symptoms. Anxiety can be classified as Arousal Anxiety, Apprehension Anxiety, or Mixed Anxiety (Fajkowska, M., et.al., 2018). The text highlights a study conducted in the English Educational department, where last semester students faced symptoms of anxiety while writing their thesis. The study aims to identify factors causing anxiety and strategies to overcome it, with a focus on reducing anxiety to ensure timely completion of writing thesis.

Writing is considered a process that requires creativity and involves steps like prewriting, drafting, editing, and sharing. The process method is advocated for teaching writing, emphasizing student-centered approaches. Graves in Danuvea (2017) outlines a five-step writing technique involving prewriting, drafting, editing, revising, and sharing/publishing. Thesis writing is discussed in terms of its definition, process, importance, principles, and challenges. According to Syamsuri et. al (2018), numerous steps need to be taken in writing, both for new writers and for those who consistently publish work that is used by many colleges. Moreover, Syamsuri et. Al (2018) listed some steps in writing thesis such as topic selection, read a previous research jurnal, research plan (drafting), and revise the research. The importance of writing thesis such as clear purpose, audience engagement, logical organization, strong support, clear explanations, and adherence to writing style guides like APA. It also highlights the significance of culture in second language learning, focusing on socio-cultural factors that influence students' writing experiences.

However, writing thesis was not easy and the challenges came from some factors such as sociocultural and psychological (Brown, 2007). Sociocultural factors like relationships between students and their environment, including supervisors, and impact the writing process. While, the psychological factors affecting thesis writing include self-esteem, anxiety, and motivation. Due to the result of pre-research, it is noted that the last semester students in the English Educational department of FKIP UNISKA experienced symptoms of anxiety, which were categorized as Mixed Anxiety. Therefore, the researcher found the anxiety symptoms of the eighth semester students in writing thesis, this research was focused on the anxiety factor.

Anxiety is characterized by tension, nervousness, and worry, often accompanied by physiological symptoms like irregular heartbeats and sweating. Tobias in Hamka (2016) argue anxiety can be define as a complex concept dependent upon not only one's feelings or self-efficacy but also appraisals concerning the potential and perceived threats. Meanwhile, Dunaeva (2017) and Satsangi & Brugnoli (2018) state that anxiety is a negative emotional state characterized by premonitions and signs of psychosomatic tension, such as abnormal heart palpitations, sweating, and difficulty breathing. Anxiety affects learning, especially in foreign language contexts, where it's referred to as Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA). FLA has symptoms like sweating, palpitations, trembling, and avoidance behavior. It can be categorized into Arousal Anxiety (ArA), Apprehension Anxiety (ApA), and Mixed Anxiety (MA).

Factors causing anxiety in language learning include fear of evaluation, time pressure, low self-confidence, insufficient writing technique, language difficulties, and lack of topic knowledge, lack of experience, pressure for perfect work, and high frequency of assignment (Wahyuni and Umam, 2017). Therefore, it needs some strategies to reduce the anxiety in writing thesis. Tanveer (2007) argued that the most general idea to reduce anxiety was to make the language classroom environment less formal and more pleasant, where students can make faults without looking or sounding unskilled. As an example, to overcome the anxiety for the students, Kondo and Ying (2004) did in his research about the tactics for coping

with language anxiety. For his research, they organized "Five-Cluster Solution" including: Preparation, Relaxation, Positive Thinking, Peer Seeking, and Resignation. The article refers to several previous studies that explore the factors and strategies related to anxiety in language learning and thesis writing. It concludes by emphasizing the importance of understanding and addressing anxiety to enhance language learning and writing outcomes.

The text concludes by emphasizing the importance of reducing anxiety to facilitate timely completion of theses. The research aims to identify the factors causing students' anxiety in writing theses and explores strategies students use to overcome this anxiety. The identification of problems highlights various anxiety-related issues faced by students during the thesis-writing process.

## **B. RESEARCH METHOD**

The research design is descriptive quantitative. Quantitative research is explaining phenomenon by collecting numeral data that are analyzed using mathematically based methods (Mujis, 2003). The chosen approach described students' anxiety in thesis writing and their strategies using questionnaires. The study was conducted at Kadiri Islamic University, involving eighth semester English Education Department students. The population was 44 students, and all were included as the sample. A questionnaire was used as the research instrument, containing 40 items. The questionnaire focused on anxiety factors and strategies. Experts validated the questionnaire's content for suitability. Data collection occurred through questionnaire distribution and the data was quantitatively analyzed. The most significant anxiety factors and strategies were determined through percentage analysis. The research followed a series of stages, including preliminary research, proposal preparation, instrument validation, data collection, analysis, and conclusion writing.

## **C. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

1. The Factors Cause of Writing Anxiety Experienced by Students of FKIP UNISKA in Writing Their Thesis

The study investigated the factors causing writing anxiety among eighth-semester students at FKIP UNISKA while writing their theses. A questionnaire with 25 items was used to collect data on nine potential anxiety-causing factors. These factors included fear of negative evaluation, time pressure, low self-confidence, insufficient writing technique, language difficulties, lack of topical knowledge, lack of experience, pressure for perfect work, and high frequency of assignment. The result can be seen in the following table:

Table 1: The Factors Cause Students' Writing Thesis Anxiety

Item Number	The Total of Respondents' Answer		Total	The Percentage		The Total of YES Answer in Each Factor	The Mean	The Percentage
	YES	NO		YES	NO			
1	9	30	39	23.1%	76.9%	46	15.3	39.3%
2	11	28	39	28.2%	71.8%			
3	26	13	39	66.7%	33.3%			
4	8	31	39	20.5%	79.5%	42	14.0	35.9%
5	13	26	39	33.3%	66.7%			
6	21	18	39	53.8%	46.2%			
7	19	20	39	48.7%	51.3%	34	17.0	43.6%
8	15	24	39	38.5%	61.5%			
9	26	13	39	66.7%	33.3%			
10	23	16	39	59.0%	41.0%	65	21.7	55.6%
11	16	23	39	41.0%	59.0%			
12	13	26	39	33.3%	66.7%			
13	33	6	39	84.6%	15.4%	71	23.7	60.7%
14	25	14	39	64.1%	35.9%			
15	9	30	39	23.1%	76.9%			
16	13	26	39	33.3%	66.7%	27	9.0	23.1%
17	5	34	39	12.8%	87.2%			
18	32	7	39	82.1%	17.9%			
19	31	8	39	79.5%	20.5%	94	31.3	80.3%
20	31	8	39	79.5%	20.5%			
21	10	29	39	25.6%	74.4%			
22	19	20	39	48.7%	51.3%	47	15.7	40.2%
23	18	21	39	46.2%	53.8%			
24	27	12	39	69.2%	30.8%			
25	20	19	39	51.3%	48.7%	47	23.5	60.3%

The analysis revealed that lack of experience was the most significant factor (80.3%) contributing to students' thesis writing anxiety. This was followed by language difficulties (60.7%), high frequency of assignments (60.3%), and insufficient writing technique (55.6%). Factors such as fear of negative evaluation (39.3%), time pressure (35.9%), low self-confidence (43.6%), lack of topical knowledge (23.1%), and pressure for perfect work (40.2%) were not major contributors to anxiety since more students responded negatively. The lack of experience in writing contributed to other related factors, like language difficulties and insufficient writing technique. Language difficulties stemmed from students' challenges in expressing ideas correctly and coherently in English. Additionally,

insufficient writing technique resulted from a lack of experience in writing. The study indicated that the high frequency of assignments (60.3%) may have been a factor contributing to students' lack of experience in thesis writing. In conclusion, the study found that lack of experience was the primary factor causing anxiety among students writing their theses. This lack of experience also contributed to language difficulties and insufficient writing technique. High frequency of assignments also played a role, potentially hindering students' ability to gain necessary experience.

2. The Kinds of Strategies Used by the Students of FKIP UNISKA to Decrease Their Anxiety in Writing Thesis

The study aimed to understand the strategies employed by eighth-semester students of FKIP UNISKA to alleviate anxiety while writing their theses. The research involved a questionnaire consisting of 15 items, which covered four distinct strategies: preparation, relaxation, positive thinking, and resignation. The data was analyzed and presented in a table, showcasing the mean scores and percentages for each strategy below:

Table 2: Student's Strategy used to Reduce their Writing Thesis Anxiety

Item Number	The Total of Respondents' Answer		Total	The Percentage		The Total of YES Answer in Each Factor	The Mean	The Percentage
	YES	NO		YES	NO			
1	34	5	39	87.2%	12.8%	171	34.2	87.7%
2	38	1	39	97.4%	2.6%			
3	33	6	39	84.6%	15.4%			
4	37	2	39	94.9%	5.1%			
5	29	10	39	74.4%	25.6%			
6	25	14	39	64.1%	35.9%	111	27.8	71.2%
7	37	2	39	94.9%	5.1%			
8	12	27	39	30.8%	69.2%			
9	37	2	39	94.9%	5.1%			
10	24	15	39	61.5%	38.5%	56	28.0	71.8%
11	32	7	39	82.1%	17.9%			
12	24	15	39	61.5%	38.5%	56	28.0	71.8%
13	32	7	39	82.1%	17.9%			
14	31	8	39	79.5%	20.5%	64	32.0	82.1%
15	33	6	39	84.6%	15.4%			

The preparation strategy garnered the highest score (171 "yes" responses), with a mean of 34.2 and a percentage of 87.7%. This strategy encompassed actions like reading references, consulting guidelines, seeking previous research, planning,



and note-taking. Notably, item 2 ("I read several references to support my thesis content") received the highest score within this strategy. The relaxation strategy received a total of 111 "yes" responses, with a mean of 27.8 and a percentage of 71.2%. Techniques such as maintaining focus, controlling oneself, deep breathing, and meditation fell under this strategy. Items 7 and 9 ("I try to stay calm to focus on my thesis writing" and "I try to control myself to remain calm and not anxious while writing my thesis") scored the highest. Positive thinking and peer seeking formed the third strategy, both receiving a total of 56 "yes" responses, with a mean of 28 and a percentage of 71.8%. Positive thinking involved incorporating positive thoughts into one's mindset, while peer seeking revolved around discussing challenges with fellow students. Notably, item 11 ("I implant positive words in my mind") received the highest score within this strategy. The fourth strategy, resignation, collected 64 "yes" responses, with a mean of 32 and a percentage of 82.1%. Resignation encompassed actions like taking breaks and resting when feeling anxious. Item 15 ("I choose to take a break when I feel anxious about writing my thesis") received the highest score. In conclusion, the dominant strategies used by eighth-semester students to reduce thesis-writing anxiety were preparation (87.7%), followed by resignation (82.1%), positive thinking (71.8%), peer seeking (71.8%), and relaxation (71.2%). The students seemed to have implemented a range of strategies to mitigate their anxiety. This study's findings were consistent with previous research indicating that preparation and positive thinking were often chosen as effective anxiety-reduction strategies. Additionally, the importance of peer interaction and social comparison in managing anxiety was highlighted. Lastly, relaxation techniques, while effective, appeared to be utilized less frequently, possibly due to the inclusion of meditation-related questions in the questionnaire

#### **D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS**

##### **Conclusion**

Based on the finding, some conclusions are

1. The main factors causing students' anxiety in writing thesis were lack of experience (80,3%), followed by language difficulties (60,7%), high assignment frequency (60,3%), and insufficient writing technique (55,6%). Others factors were not considered significant since more students answered negatively than positively.
2. The primary strategy students used to alleviate thesis-writing anxiety was preparation (87,7%), followed by resignation (82,1%), positive thinking (71,8%), peer seeking (71,8%), and relaxation (71,2%). This suggests that students employed various strategies to address their thesis related anxiety.

### **Suggestions**

Based on the finding, the following suggestions are given as follows:

1. For students, it is suggested that they able to practice with their writing skill, especially in writing academically. It is better done early in the previous semester so they will be more experienced in writing thesis.
2. For advisor, it is suggested to help students to reduce their anxiety in writing thesis. Especially, the advisor is suggested to give writing practice and guidance like how to arrange the thesis.



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