

# The Correlation Between Students' Self-Esteem and Their Writing Ability

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## Keywords:

*Self-Esteem*

*Writing Ability*

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## ABSTRACT

This study was aimed to figure out the most dominant students' self-esteem, whether there was any significant correlation between the students' self-esteem and their writing ability and whether there were differences between students in their self-esteem. The participants of this study were tenth grade students in Payabenua subdistrict, Bangka Belitung province. The data of this study were collected by providing questionnaire sheets in the form of close ended questionnaire and writing test. Furthermore, the results were analyzed by using Pearson Product Moment to correlate both variables students' self-esteem (X) and writing ability (Y). The result showed that the most dominant students' self-esteem was the domain of self-esteem with the percentage of 55.38%. Since the correlation coefficient computation was 0.228, and the critical value in a table at significant level 0.05/5% was 0.2441. Thus, rxy was lower than r-table. In brief, there was no significant correlation between students' self-esteem and their writing ability. In addition, there was also no significance difference between male and female students' self-esteem.



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## Introduction

One of the important skills in English that should be learned by students is writing. Writing is one way of providing variety in classroom procedures (Raimes, 1998). Writing is also a process, since it requires learners to do activities of generating ideas and collecting data to the publishing of finished text (Durga & Rao, 2018). It is regarded difficult because learners should know how to change the ideas into beautiful sentences, and they also have to focus on vocabulary, grammar, structure and social understanding (Faraj, 2015). Furthermore, in Indonesia, it is stated that in the curriculum the students are expected to be able to write English in the classroom along with their mother tongue. On the other hand, some of students choose to be passive in their classroom and they do not have motivation, courage and confidence to write. Whereas the teachers have tried so many methods and tools to teach writing and to increase students' writing skill, but the students still get low score in writing. Therefore, it might happen because of the students' self-esteem.

Self-esteem is a positive or negative orientation toward oneself (Heatheron & Polivy, 1991; Rosenberg, 2015). In addition, Hassan pointed out that self-esteem is one aspect that determines a person success in interacting with his social environment (Hassan, 1992). In other words, self-esteem is a term used to describe the personal value of an individual, towards herself (Sprecher et al., 2013). In the sense of the word, self-esteem refers to how you value, appreciate, and like yourself.

Self-esteem is a person's general assessment of himself, whether in the form of a negative or positive assessment, which ultimately results in a feeling of self-worth or self-worth in living life (Smith et al., 2014). Self-esteem is the awareness of how much value we place on ourselves. Self-esteem related to personal beliefs about skills, abilities and confidence. Confidence is a measure of faith in one's own abilities; esteem is about our sense of self. It involves both thoughts and emotions and influences how we perceive others and interact with the world (Steinem, 2012).

Self-esteem is a term used to describe the personal value of an individual, towards herself. In the sense of the word, self-esteem refers to how you value, appreciate, and like yourself (Hewitt, 2020). Self-esteem refers to the act of evaluating individuals to themselves in low and high ways. It expresses an attitude of

approval and disapproval and refers to the extent of which an individual believes herself to be capable, successful, significant and worthy. Self-esteem is divided into three parts, namely, global self-esteem, domain specific and state self-esteem (Brown & Marshall, 2013). In addition, Brown declared that no successful affective and cognitive activity can be carried out without some degree of self-confidence, self-esteem, knowledge of yourself and believe in your own capabilities for that activity (H. D. Brown, 2000). In other words, self-esteem is the way we see and believe in our capabilities that we know as it influences our success in learning.

According to Brown and Marshall, self-esteem is divided into three parts, namely:

a. **Global Self-Esteem**

Self-esteem is generally conceptualized as an assessment of one's own worth. Rosenberg declared that global self-esteem is the evaluative component of self-knowledge. Researchers call this form of self-esteem as global self-esteem or trait self-esteem, as it is relatively enduring, both across time and situations. Global self-esteem is more strongly related to measures of psychology well-being, specific (academic) self-esteem is a much better predictor of school performance.

b. **Domain Specific Self-Esteem**

Domain specific self-esteem is how a person views themselves in positively or negatively to specific attributes. The term of self-esteem also refers to the process of how people evaluate their abilities. For example, someone who doubts her ability in the classroom is sometimes have less academic self-esteem and someone who feels she is popular and believe in herself is sometimes have high social self-esteem (Hassan, 1992).

c. **State Self-Esteem**

State self-esteem is defined to how evaluation themselves in a particular moment, due to specific situation. State Self-esteem refers to the way of how we evaluate ourselves at a given point in time. This kind of self-esteem could be from a positive or negative outcome. For example, someone could say herself is over the moon after getting high score in a test or an examination and someone could say herself is low after rejecting from her favorite school (Heatherton & Polivy, 1991).

### **Writing Ability**

Writing is one of important skills that should be mastered by the students. Writing refers to the process of combining words into proper sentences and then combining sentences into a correct text (Caswell, 2004). Writing plays an important role in the process of language learning. On the other hand, learning this skill is indeed not easy. As a result, if the students have good ability in writing then they can have good abilities in language.

According to Harmer, writing refers to the process of how writers produce language and express opinions, and ideas (Harmer, 2006). In addition, Hadley mentioned that English academic writing is regarded as the most complex skill for the students which refer to the ability of the students to tell and retell the information in the form of the text proper unity and coherence (Hadley, 2001). In other words, writing is the ability to convey the opinions and feelings to others through written language or form.

### **The Correlation between Students' Self-esteem and Their Writing Ability**

A study by Dev and Qiqieh, focusing on the relationship between English language proficiency, academic achievement and self-esteem of non-native English speaking students suggested a negative correlation between English language and self-esteem. As the per result shown in the study, only 6% of the students had a GPA (English achievement) less than 2, 37%, then had between 2-2.99, while 50.8% of the students had between 3.00-3.99. Furthermore, only 11% of the students had low self-esteem, then 79.3% had moderate self-esteem, and 9.7% had high self-esteem (Dev & Qiqieh, 2016).

Another study by Hisken indicated that self-esteem influences the students' reading comprehension by making the students become more confident and self-esteem can help them to develop their achievement especially their reading comprehension achievement. The study showed that self-esteem gives the positive impact on students especially between self-esteem and reading achievement. A high level of self-esteem acts as a buffer against anxiety so students who have high self-esteem or not as likely to struggle with reading challenge (Hisken, 2011).

A study by Intan Satriani showed that there was a positive correlation between students' self-esteem and their reading ability (Satriani, 2017).

Gender is one of such factors that is also mentioned in literature to have considerable effects on students' academic performance at schools, especially in science subjects. The importance of examining

students' performance in connection to gender is based primarily on the socio-cultural differences between male and female. Some occupations have been regarded as men are into crafts, agriculture, arts and engineers. While the women are mostly into catering, typing, nursing, etc. These beliefs are extended in our knowledge, society and the way we talk about it (Adigun et al., 2015).

Many researchers have attempted to elaborate and even carried out many studies touching on gender among men and women as a factor in academics. Gender is viewed as the range of physical, mental, biological, and behavioral characteristics relating to and differentiating between femininity and masculinity. These beliefs have been expanded to educational settings. In education system, female students are believed and praised for their good behavior, appearance, and neat work. Some studies found female students to score significantly higher than males on AG and study time (Kisigot et al., 2021).

Studies show that males and females have different levels of self-esteem during adolescence. Males tend to have higher self-esteem as teenagers and into adulthood, which is the most common difference. In general, male self-esteem tends to decline at a slower rate than female self-esteem does, and male positive feelings about one-self are likely to be much stronger than female self-esteem. However recent meta-analyses and studies have shown that, despite the small difference, male adolescents and young adults have higher self-esteem than their female counterparts (Bhamani et al., 2014).

Regarding writing skill, some issues appear in the Islamic Senior High School. It was found that 80% of the students were not successful in learning English especially in writing descriptive text, based on the result of their achievement test. In this case, it is hard enough for them to develop an idea into a long paragraph. There are some factors that might influence the students' quality of writing; when the students have to perform their English such as telling or making a descriptive text both in oral or written then the others would pay their attention and give comment and their comments could be negative and positive. Hence some students felt insecure when producing a text in English because they felt worry about their performance, score and others' judgement. In addition, they think that they are not able to write and do not believe in their ability. According to the teacher, the students had low motivation in learning English. They did not believe in their ability when they learn English in the classroom.

Considering the fact above, self-esteem is one of the important aspects in learning because it intensely impacts individual's decision and choices (Naderi et al., 2009; Shekhar & Malhotra, 2013; Subon et al., 2020). In other words, self-esteem serves an inspirational capacity by making it more or less that individuals would deal with themselves and investigate their full potential (Hewitt, 2020). Arshad concluded that there are several factors about the appraisal of the effects of self-esteem, they are personality, thoughts, direction of others, life experiences, social circumstances because students with high self-esteem would be more likely to have a stronger sense of self as they grow up (Arshad et al., 2015). In addition, Harris and Orth argue that self-esteem has a marked effect on students' academic performance. By knowing students' self-esteem, it helps them to handle setbacks with ease. When the students are secure and confident about who and what they are, they are more likely to have a good mindset (Harris & Orth, 2020).

## Method

This study employs correlational type of research, which attempts to see whether there is a correlation between students' self-esteem and their writing ability. In conducting this study, sample of high school students were used, which consist of 65 students: 33 females, and 32 males.

In collecting the data, there were two instruments applied, self-esteem questionnaire and writing test. The questionnaire consists of 55 items that were responded by the respondents in five-point scale ranging from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree', with the highest value 5 and the lowest one 1. After a validity process by using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient, there were 46 items were valid. The inventory is adapted from Brown and Marshall. The statements are divided into three types of self-esteem, namely global self-esteem, domain specific self-esteem and state self-esteem. Meanwhile a writing test was conducted by asking the sample to write a descriptive text. There were three topics of descriptive text, but it was then selected only one with the highest validity score used for the instrument.

The data of questionnaire results were then analyzed by calculating the average scores of each type of self-esteem. While the results of writing test were analyzed by scoring each aspect of writing, those are content, structure, organization, vocabulary, language features, and mechanics. The data of writing test was calculated by two raters. The two variables were then correlated by using Pearson Product Moment Formula to find out whether there is a correlation between them.

**Results**

**1. The Result of Self Esteem Questionnaire**

**Table 1**  
**Statistics of Self Esteem Questionnaire**

N	Valid	65
	Missing	0
Mean		150.55
Std. Error of Mean		1.635
Median		153.00
Mode		153
Std. Deviation		13.180
Variance		173.720
Range		75
Minimum		116
Maximum		191
Sum		9786

The table 1 shows that the values of mean 150.55. The maximum score gained by was 191 and the minimum score was 116, with the standard deviation 13.180.

**Table 2**  
**The Average of Characteristic of Self Esteem per Gender**

No	Characteristic of Self Esteem	Percentage		Average	
		Male	Female	Male	Female
1	Global	9.2%	16.9%	6.0	11.0
2	Domain	29.2%	26.1%	19.0	17.0
3	State	10.9%	7.7%	7.0	5.0
Total		100%			

As shown in table above, it showed that male students had low average than female students in Global Self Esteem with number 11.0 > 6.0. It indicated that most of female students related to measures of psychology well-being and much better predictor of school performance. In Domain Self Esteem, male students got the average was 19.0 and female students got the average was 17.0. it indicates that male students have less academic Self-Esteem and someone who feels he was popular and believe in himself was sometimes had high social Self Esteem. In State Self Esteem male students got the higher average than female students with the number 7.0 > 5.0. In indicated that most of male students defined to how evaluation themselves in a particular moment, due to specific situation.

**The Dominant Students' Self-Esteem**

Based on the calculation of students' self-esteem questionnaire score, the result of the data was presented below

**Table 3**  
**The Result of Students' Self-Esteem**

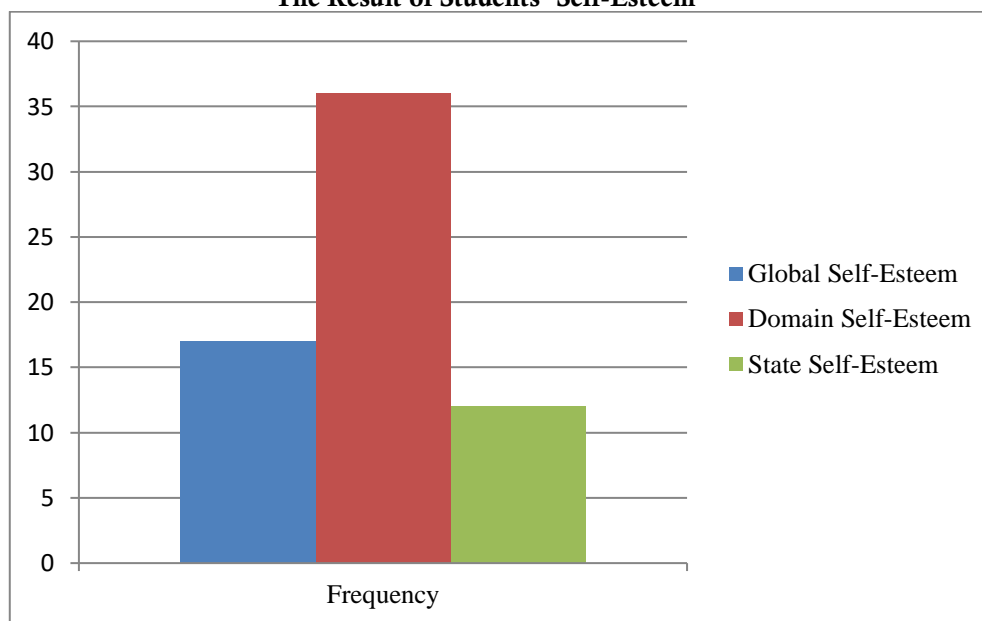
No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Global Self-Esteem	17	26,16%
2	Domain Self-Esteem	36	55,38%
3	State Self-Esteem	12	18,46%
<b>Total</b>		<b>65</b>	<b>100%</b>

As presented in table 14, domain self-esteem was the most dominant students' self-esteem with the percentage of 55,38%, it means that most of the students viewed themselves in positively or negatively to specific attributes. The students who doubt their ability in the classroom their ability is sometimes have less academic self-esteem and the students who feel they are popular and believe in themselves or sometimes have high social self-esteem.

The second category was global self-esteem with the percentage was 26,16%, it means that the students with this category viewed themselves as a whole. In other words, the students with lower global self-esteem believed that their received less positive feedback from peers showing that they were liked or disliked, and the students with lower global self-esteem tend to underestimate their value.

The third category was state self-esteem with the percentage of 18,46%, it means that the students with this category could view themselves are enthusiastic after obtaining high score in a test and the students could view themselves are low after rejecting from their favorite school.

**Figure 1**  
**The Result of Students' Self-Esteem**



**2. The Result of Students' Writing Scores**

In accordance with the following table of descriptive analysis of writing ability, the maximum score of students' writing ability was 86.00, while the minimum score of students' writing ability was 47.00. Moreover, the sum of students' writing ability was 4.670, the mean was 71.85, and the standard deviation was 8.279.

**Table 4**  
**Statistical Scores of Writing Ability**

N	Valid	65
	Missing	0
Mean		71.85
Std. Error of Mean		1.027
Median		75.00
Mode		77
Std. Deviation		8.279
Variance		68.538
Range		39
Minimum		47
Maximum		86
Sum		4670

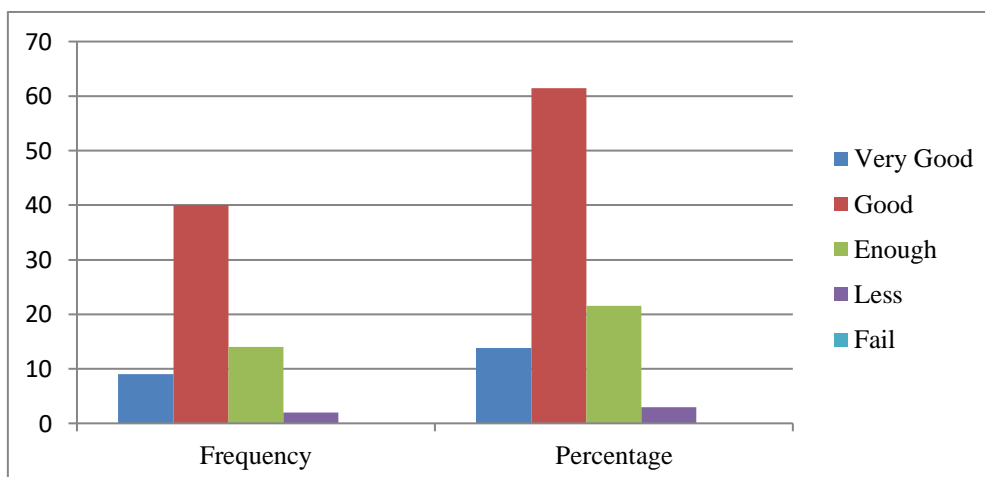
Moreover, to find out the description of the result of the students' writing ability, the researcher used score interval which represented each of students' writing ability test. In additional, the specifics of each category of students' writing ability could be seen in the table below.

**Table 5**  
**The Criteria of Scores Students' Writing Ability**

Score Interval	Category	Frequency	Percentage
80-100	Very Good	9	13,85%
66-79	Good	40	61,54%
56-65	Enough	14	21,55%
40-55	Less	2	3,07%
30-39	Fail	-	-
<b>Total</b>		<b>65</b>	<b>100%</b>

The result reveals that 9 students (13,85%) were categorized into very good category, 40 students (61,54%) were categorized into good category and 14 students (21,546%) were categorized into enough category, while 2 students (3,07%) were categorized into less category.

**Figure 2**  
**The Criteria of Scores Students' Writing Ability**



### 3. The Correlation between Students' Self-Esteem and their Writing Ability

The result of the correlation between students' self-esteem and their writing ability can be seen in the following table:

**Table 6**  
**The Correlation Analysis between Students' Self-Esteem and Their Writing Ability**

	Self-Esteem	Writing Score
Self-Esteem Pearson Correlation	1	.228
Sig. (2-tailed)		.068
N	65	65
Writing Score Pearson Correlation	.228	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	.068	
N	65	65

**Table 7**  
**Interpretation Coefficient Correlation Value r**

Interval Coefficient	Correlation Degree
0.00-0.199	Very Low
0.20-0.399	Low
0.40-0.599	Strong Enough
0.60-0.799	Strong
0.80-1.000	Very Strong

As presented in the table above, the researcher obtained the calculation coefficient correlation between students' self-esteem and their writing ability. The table indicated the information about the result of correlation coefficient computation was 0.228, and the critical value in a table at significant level 0.05/5% was 0.2441. Thus,  $r_{xy}$  was lower than  $r$  table. In brief, there was no significant correlation between students' self-esteem and their writing ability.

Furthermore, the researcher conducted that the correlation between students' self-esteem (variable X) and writing ability (variable Y) had no correlation with the score correlation 0.228. As presented in table 8, with the result of  $r_{xy}$  0.228 was in the interval 0.20-0.399. It revealed that the correlation between students' self-esteem and their writing ability was categorized in low.

#### 4. Analysis of Difference between Male and Female Students' Self-Esteem

The result of the analysis can be seen in the following table.

**Table 8**  
**Paired Samples Statistics**

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1 Male	10.67	31	7.234	4.177
Female	11.00	32	6.000	3.464

Based on the paired samples statistics table, it revealed that the difference between male and female in students' self-esteem, the obtained mean self-esteem of male students was 10.67 with SD was 7.234 while the female students obtained the average mean of 11.00 with SD 6.000, while the mean difference was 0.333.

**Table 9**  
**Paired Samples Correlations**

	N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1 Male & Female	32	.829	.377

In accordance with the paired samples correlations above, it indicated that the correlation between male and female students was 0.829 with the probability (sig) level was 0.377.

**Table 10**  
**Paired Samples Test**

	Paired Differences					t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1 Male – Female	-.333	4.041	2.333	-10.373	9.706	-.143	2	.899

In the result of paired samples test above, it can be concluded that the mean between male and female students was 0.333 with SD was 4.041, std. Error mean was 2.333, and t-obtained was 0.143, at the significant level of  $p < 0.05$  for 2-tailed and with df 2. If the t-obtained was greater than t-table with the significant level 0.05 it means that there was a significant difference between male and female students'

self-esteem, nevertheless if the t-obtained was lower than t-table with the significant level 0.05 it means that there was no significant difference between male and female students' self-esteem.

## Discussions

There were 36 students with the percentage of 55,38% in domain self-esteem, it means that most of the students viewed themselves in positively or negatively to specific attributes. The students who doubt their ability in the classroom their ability is sometimes have less academic self-esteem and the students who feel they are popular and believe in themselves or sometimes have high social self-esteem. There were 17 students with the percentage of 26,16% in global self-esteem, it means that the students with this category viewed themselves as a whole. In other word, the students with lower global self-esteem believed that their received less positive feedback from peers showing that they were liked or disliked, and the students with lower global self-esteem tend to underestimate their value. There were 12 students with the percentage of 18,46% in state self-esteem, it means that the students with this category could view themselves are enthusiastic after obtaining high score in a test and the students could view themselves are low after rejecting from their favorite school. In brief, the most dominant students' self-esteem was domain self-esteem.

Based on the result of statistical analysis of students' self-esteem towards their writing ability by using Pearson Correlation test, it indicated that there was no significant correlation between students' self-esteem and their writing ability. It also revealed that the correlation between students' self-esteem and their writing ability was categorized as low. Furthermore, the result of paired sample test indicated that there was no significant difference between male and female students' self-esteem.

In addition, there were some studies that conducted the same result with this study. Riska declared that in her study there was no significant correlation between students' self-esteem and students speaking skill because, self-esteem was not the most dominant factor that affected to speaking skill (Ananda, 2017). Other study conducted by Asakereh and Yousofi indicated that there was no significant correlation between the components of reflective thinking with self-efficacy, self-esteem, and academic achievement of Iranian EFL students because, the reflective thinking was not paramount importance when it came to its relationship with self-efficacy, self-esteem, and academic achievement of Iranian EFL students (Asakereh & Yousofi, 2018). The last study conducted by Dev and Qiqieh stated that there was no positive relationship between English language proficiency, academic achievement, and self-esteem of non-native English speaking students because, many students did not provide much importance in acquiring their English skills and they also did not believe that increasing English language fluency would enhance their stand in the society (Dev & Qiqieh, 2016).

However, the researcher obtained the result of the students' self-esteem towards their writing ability that there was no correlation between of the variables. It could be because self-esteem was not the most dominant factor that affected to writing ability. It could be because of other aspects affecting their English learning.

## Conclusions

The result of this study revealed that most of the students had good self-esteem with domain self-esteem as the most dominant self-esteem the students had, following by global self-esteem, and state self-esteem as the least dominant one. It means that the students look out for themselves, especially their ability in language learning.

Moreover, the students also had good writing ability, despite the result of the correlational analysis. It revealed that it was not significant correlated with their self-esteem. Furthermore, when it comes to gender, it was found that there was either no significant difference between female and male students in their self-esteem.

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