

:

\*

\* \*

:

(265 )

( )

(1):

(2).

(3) .

**ABSTRACT**

The current research attempted to investigate writing apprehension causes among Palestinian university English majors and provide possible solutions. The researchers designed two questionnaires ; the first covers possible causes of writing apprehension whereas the second tackles the effective solutions for this problem. The study sample consisted of (265 ) students . The researchers used t-test paired sample , one way ANOVA and Sheffe test . The study concluded the following : (1) gender and academic level were not significant variables in students' estimates of the causes of writing apprehension (2) the academic institution variable affected the subjects 'estimates of the causes and remedies of the writing apprehension (3) high-achievers were more apprehensive than low achievers .

\*

\*\*

### **Introduction:**

Writing is not an easy task, as some people may think; it is rather a sophisticated skill, if compared with other language skills, which may need less effort (Abu Shawish 2009:1, Abd Al Rahim 2011, 13, Huwari and Abd Aziz 2011, 190). Since it is referred to in some contexts as transformation of one's thoughts into language, it combines many interrelated components. It involves different mental activities before being performed in their final written form. It needs that the writer should think, compose and create ideas, check their relatedness to each other and to the main idea of the topic, memorize and recall lexical items thought to be more relevant than others, sift and discard irrelevant ideas, organize these ideas according to their importance in a way to develop the main idea i.e. theme of the topic. In addition, it needs that the writer should link his ideas to each other, perform them verbally on paper as a first draft and then revise and finalize them to get the final draft. Raimes (1984: 335) categorizes the components of writing as content, organization, grammar, syntax, mechanics, word choice, the targeted audience and the writer's process. Thus, writing is such a complex skill even for native speakers since it requires conscious mental effort.

Taking all this into consideration while practicing writing, students will feel stressed and anxious and quit writing. This, in turn, leads to difficulties in producing effective and coherent written pieces. Anxiety is a personal trait which affects one's success in acquiring and learning language. Everyone may become anxious in certain situations and under certain circumstances, yet some may become more frequently anxious than others. Those do not seem to do as well as others for their feeling of anxiety impedes their learning of language. Nevertheless, the findings of some studies revealed that anxiety would motivate the learner to try again and repeat his attempt in the learning task i.e. facilitative anxiety. The other facet of anxiety which is the concern of this study is the debilitating anxiety which inhibits the learner since it leads him to avoid the learning task (Kharma and Bakir, 2003: 257). Hall (2011, 131-132) asserts

" language anxiety " the feeling of tension and apprehension specifically associated with second language context" is experienced by many learners. It is quite possibly the affective factor most pervasively obstructs the learning process "

...

Students with writing anxiety have problems in writing anything. An important question arises: Is writing apprehension a cause or an effect for bad writing? The answer will be: which is first, the egg or the hen? It is thought that writing apprehension is bilateral; it can be a cause for bad written product and an effect for hard and sophisticated writing process.

## **Literature Review**

### **Writing Apprehension.**

Both L1 and L2 student writers attempt writing tasks. They encounter difficulties and get stuck gazing at the blank sheet of paper and cannot begin writing and when they do they do it uncomfortably and painstakingly as well. This is a common psychological phenomenon that has been known in the literature under different terms as writing apprehension, block, anxiety, and fear, though apprehension and anxiety are the two most frequently used terms to describe this problem.

The first to create the term 'writing apprehension' were Daly and Miller (1975 cited in Gungl and Taylor, 1989: 236). Writing apprehension is defined as a psychological construct associated with a person's tendencies or predisposition to approach or avoid situations requiring writing accompanied by some amount of evaluation (Daly 1978; Faigley et. al.1980:4).

The phenomenon of Writing apprehension has received much scholarly effort because of the importance assigned to it by many educators and writing specialists. Regarding the characteristics of the high apprehensives' written work, Daly (1978, Daly and Miller, 1975) confirm that it is of lower quality and their papers appeared to be shorter and have less developed language and sentence structure (Faigley, Daly and Witte, 1991: 11-12). Reeves (1997: 39) adds that students have more difficulty with getting new ideas; their ideas are not well-developed; they score lower on measures of syntactic maturity.

Writing literature provides us with the following causes of high levels of writing apprehension:

1. Focus and overemphasis on form i.e. on grammar, punctuation, and generally perceptive writing. (Gungl and Taylor, 1989: 236- 240 ; Abdul-Fattah 1995 :6).
2. Related to the above is the writing tutors' adoption of product approach. (Stapa and Abdul Majid, 2009 :41 )

3. Serious writing anxiety problems are attributed to instructors' not teaching the teachable aspect of writing (Grundy 1985: 152).
4. Students develop high level of writing apprehension because of their writing being evaluated whether the evaluation source is self , teachers or peers (Maria, 2006: 3) . This applies to feedback given in evaluative context (Borich, 2004: 19).
5. Students deficits in skills training and poor teacher negative responses to early writing attempts affect their later levels of writing anxiety (Harvley, Fedler, 1978 cited in Faigley , Daly , and Witte , 1981: 4).
6. Lack of revision and revision skills can lead to writer's block , as the writer tries to achieve perfection in the initial draft . (Fritzsche, Young , and Hickson , 2003). This is known in the literature as perfections (Boice, 1993).

Abdel Latif ,(2007: 67–70) further, provides the following factors accounting for high English writing apprehension : Lack of linguistic knowledge, low foreign language self-esteem, poor history of writing achievement and perceived writing performance improvement, low English writing self-efficacy and instructional practice of English writing tutors such as :

- a. Teachers' focus on teaching the theoretical concepts of writing and neglect of practical aspects.
- b. Lack of feedback given by the teachers on the essays students write.
- c. Teachers' overuse of criticism when commenting on the essays presented at the lecture.

### **Measures of reducing writing apprehension:**

1. Students' fear of being negatively evaluated. Here teachers can give students writing assignments that are not graded. Such as journal writing, exploratory writing on a topic, and rough drafts of essay (Clark, 2005: 9).
2. Resorting to peer feedback as a substitute for teacher feedback when it works. This feedback should be given in non-threatening way that is non evaluative context. (Borich , 2004: 19; Clark, 2005: 9; Kurk and Atay, 2007:20 ;Grabe and Kaplan 1996: 87, Krause, 2001).
3. Teaching writing as a process rather than a final product. (Rankin-Brown, 2006: 4; Clark,2005:5; Grabe and Kaplan, 1996: 87).

...

4. Identifying error patterns students make and helping student-writers correct these errors rather than correcting every single mistake by the teacher is a widely accepted technique in overcoming high levels of writing apprehension among students. (Bernstein, Alison, 1978; Reeves, 1997: 40; Wachholz and Etheridge, 1996).
5. Encouraging students to spend enough time on free writing activities and techniques as these are frequently cited techniques to reduce high writing apprehension levels (Veit, 1990; Dickson 2001; Reynolds, 1988; Southwell, 1977; Stover,, 1988; Boice, 1992: 108).
6. Teaching reading and writing, concurrently should be used as this has been found to reduce students' writing anxiety since this reduces student errors and provides them with good writing models (Daud, and Abu Kassim, 2005: 16). Reeves (1997: 39 - 44 ) adds the following techniques to reduce writing anxiety:
7. Writing more because apprehensive writers have generally done very little writing that has been valued as unsatisfactory by prior teachers.
8. Discouraging appropriation of voice. Here students are encouraged to write about their experiences and to be more expressive. To take ownership of their writing and to personalize knowledge are needed.
9. Listening to fearful writers. Teaching about feelings and past experiences in a small group frequently works well and can serve a prewriting activity which will make writing a less anxiety-provoking activity.
10. Contextualization and customization; this means not teaching grammar in isolation; rather, it means teaching it within the context of a whole piece of writing.
11. Conferencing during writing stages reported success in reducing writer's block in students as a result of seeing them privately in conferences between drafts, providing them with more opportunities to talk about their anxiety about starting or finishing a particular writing task. Other criteria to reduce writer's anxiety are also suggested, such as: collaborating with students for evaluation criteria, coaching peers for effective response, being aware of possible gender differences, varying writing modes, talking about writers you like and sharing writing.

The writing center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill puts forth the following strategies for handling writing apprehension. These are as follows:

Getting support from a person i.e. a family member, a classmate, a teacher, a colleague or a writing center tutor you trust to encourage you in writing life, identifying one's strengths, recognizing that writing is a complex process, think of yourself as an apprentice, try new tactics when you get stuck and celebrate your success.

### **Writing apprehension Cause or Effect:**

Writing specialists and psychologists as well were both interested in identifying the relationship between writing anxiety and poor writing quality and performance. This is important because it helps them to recognize what leads to what i.e. whether writing apprehension causes or leads to poor writing quality or the other way round. Faigley, Daly and Witte (1981) could not reach a decisive conclusion. They believed that though their study demonstrated that apprehension played some role in writing performance and competence, it was important to note that no causality was assumed. In other words, writing apprehension was not assumed causally to lead to poorer writing, nor was poorer writing assumed to causally result in apprehension. They concluded that the relationship is bidirectional rather than unidirectional. However, Abdel Latif (2007: 60) in his study reached the conclusion that writing apprehension is an effect; it is the result of lack of linguistic competence and writing skill. Likewise, Clark (2005:8) concluded that writing apprehension is a result not a cause. It is a result of lacking knowledge or understanding necessary to complete the writing task and the students' belief that writing is hard work.

### **Gender differences in writing apprehension:**

The results of research on gender differences are not conclusive. Some studies confirmed the existence of gender differences in favor of one of the sexes whereas others asserted that gender plays no role in writing apprehension. For instance, Masse and Popovich (2003: 10) say that there is no evidence that there are differences in apprehension due to gender. Daly (1985 cited in Gungl and Taylor, 1989: 239) has noted that females have significantly lower levels of writing apprehension than their male counterparts because they get more positive teacher reactions to their writing than do males. Nonetheless, Abdul-Fattah (1995: 6) concluded that his female subjects in general and advanced students experienced more writing apprehension than did males and less advanced students.

...

### **Feelings and beliefs of high apprehensives:**

High apprehensive writers find writing unrewarding, even punishing. And when placed in situation requiring them to write, they experience more than normal amounts of anxiety (Faigley, Daly and Witte 1981: 6). They are most likely to be pessimistic about their writing assignment (Popovich 2003:1). High apprehensives have lower levels of self-confidence or more precisely low writing English self-efficacy (Abdel –Latif , 2007: 70). As a result, they underestimate their competence and abilities relative to less anxious ones (Mac Intyre et. al. 1997 cited in Daud and Abu Kassim, 2005: 5). And they believe they will fail or will not do well and usually will live up to these expectations and fail as a result (Gungle and Taylor, 1989: 236; Bloom, 1980) because if a student has negative predisposition or attitude toward writing, it matters how skilled he or she is at writing (Daly and Miller cited in Gungle and Taylor, 1989: 371). In addition, the belief that is widespread among student-writers that they are not meant to be writers leads to increase the levels of writing apprehension (Stolpa, 2004). Moreover, high apprehensives see writing as something that is an innate quality and therefore they cannot improve in writing (Wachholz and Etheridge, 1996).

### **Related Studies**

Lan, Hong and Hsu ( 2011 ) conducted a study the purpose of which was to develop guided writing strategies in a web-based environment based on media richness theory and to compare the effects of these guided strategies on students' writing attitudes. Attitude, in this study, was used as an umbrella term including motivation, enjoyment and writing anxiety " apprehension ". The guided writing strategies employed were ; the first, RM.GWS whose main characteristics are : (1) several multi-media components such as animation, mages and sound are provided to guide writing ; (2) the content provide better simulations of real life context for connecting learners' experiences to enhance more deeply conceptual thinking for writing ; (3) learners can freely integrate various media content and further plan the overall structure of their articles ; (4) the environment allows multi-users operation simultaneously and facilitates interactions among the users and the system. The second strategy was LM-GWS whose characteristics are ; (1) the environment mainly provides text-based learning materials related to the learning subject for learners' subject ; (2) several

words such roles, animals, events, scenery, native language idioms and other phrases describing the scenery are provided to help students construct their ideas ; (3) learners can only brows suggestive words and sentences regarding real life context and concepts to acquire inspiration and proceed with their writing ; (4) the environment also supports multi-users operation mechanism . The third strategy was PP-GWS. It's characteristics are ; (1) the instructor guides learners to write in traditional ways such as writing or drawing on the board, verbal prompts, using a text book. Pictures or video ; (2) all learners share a common learning material provided by the instructor ; (3) verbal prompts are mainly adopted in this environment to guide learners' writing by the instructor ; (4) the environment doesn't support multi-users operation mechanism.

The participants were 66 sixth graders with an average age of 12 from an elementary school in Taiwan. All participants had similar educational background. Random sampling was used to assign students to 3 groups ; group 1 " 15 males and 9 females ". group 2 " 9 males and 12 females ; group 3 " 12 males and 9 females ". The experiment lasted for 12 weeks. The study concluded that RM-GWS had a more positive influence in enhancing writing attitudes than the other proposed strategies. This means that RM-GWS environment can help learners to have better writing attitudes in terms of motivation, enjoyment, and anxiety and reduced writing anxiety. " writing apprehension ".

Huwari and Abd Aziz ( 2011 ) conducted a study to investigate the levels of writing apprehension among Jordanian students when writing in English. It also meant to explore the relationship between age, and socio economic status and writing apprehension. Additionally, it attempted to discover the writing situation that led to the Jordanian post graduate students to feel most apprehensive when writing. The study tool was the writing apprehension test " WAT " which was designed by Dally and Miller. The statistical techniques used were Hierarchical cluster, ANOVA and frequency. Results revealed that : (1) the majority of Jordanian post graduate students at UM faced high level writing apprehension ; (2) the relation between age, socio economic status with writing apprehension was significant ; (3) there was a significant relationship between socio economic status and writing apprehension ; (4) the majority of the respondents



...

mentioned that they felt apprehensive when writing a theses more than writing journals or writing assignment.

Daud and Abu Kassim (2005) conducted a study whose aim was to explore the relationship between anxiety and writing performance namely whether writing anxiety is cause or effect. The study utilizes the correlational research design. The study sample was 186 third Year University students whose level of proficiency varied. The sample included only 36 male students. The tools used were the Writing Apprehension Test (WAT) to measure the students' writing anxiety.

The researchers reached the following findings: students with low proficiency were found to be more anxious, and their anxiety resulting from their lack of vocabulary knowledge and experience of language use were identified to be the causes of anxiety. They recommended exposing students to more English. Writing teachers need to change the way they teach writing as the lecture-based model, which is the normal practice that is not effective. Besides, students should be encouraged to use the target language in an authentic manner. In addition, teaching reading and writing simultaneously needs to be tried because it has been found that students' writing anxiety was reduced and their attitudes towards writing were more positive when this was done. Moreover, various strategies to expand students' knowledge of vocabulary should be adopted to help them produce better written work. And as for teachers, they are advised to focus on fluency rather than accuracy. Writing teachers need to identify the errors in the students' work and require the students to correct the mistakes themselves as well.

On the other hand, Hassan (2001) investigated the relationship of writing apprehension and self-esteem to the writing quality and quantity among a sample of EFL students. His subjects were 182 third year students enrolled in the English Department at Mansoura University during the academic year 1998-1999. Hassan designed and administered an English writing apprehension questionnaire and a foreign language self-esteem questionnaire to assess writing apprehension and self-esteem. The data on the students writing were obtained from compositions written by the subjects. These scripts were investigated to assess their writing quantity and quality. Hassan Concluded:

- 1) There is significant relationship between writing apprehension and self-esteem. This means that high apprehensives about writing also suffer from lower self -esteem than their counterparts with low apprehension.

- 2) Surprisingly, the correlation was not strong enough to conclude that there is a negative relationship between writing apprehension and writing quality.
- 3) Students with low writing apprehension write better quality compositions than their counterparts with high writing apprehension.
- 4) Students who have low self-esteem and low writing apprehension scored less than their counterparts on the writing quantity task.
- 5) Both writing apprehension and self-esteem did not have any effect on the writing quantity task.

Cheng, Horowitz and Schallert (1999) carried out a study whose subjects were 433 Taiwanese English majors to explore correlation between classroom anxiety and FL writing and speaking skills. The study tools were: Horowitz et. al.'s foreign language classroom anxiety scale (FLCAS); the second language version of the Dally-Miller writing apprehension test (SLWAT); and a background questionnaire designed to draw a picture of demographic and specific learning history information. Moreover , they used final course grades as achievement measurements for comparison. Correlations were used to compare second language classroom anxiety and second language writing anxiety and second language writing anxiety with second language speaking and writing achievement. The results of regression analyses illustrated that although the correlations' magnitude was small, all of the second language classroom anxiety variables were significantly and negatively correlated with both English speaking and writing.

Additionally, Abdul-Fattah's study (1995) attempted to achieve the following objectives: to investigate the depth of writing apprehension the students experience on five dimensions perceived as potential stimuli of their discomfort and worry while doing a writing task, to explore the notion that highly apprehensive university students are less successful in writing in terms of their results on the completion of their English writing course and to examine the connection between students WA and their attention to formal or content aspects of the writing activity. The study tool was a Likert type questionnaire with six possible responses developed by the researcher used to elicit the informant's responses. After piloting and expert judgment of the instrument, only 36 items were retained. The subjects were 151

...

English major students at Yarmouk University in Jordan, from all academic levels of both sexes; 52 males and 99 females.

It was found that female students scored higher than males, and advanced student level (12) scored higher than less advanced ones on the whole instrument and on each of the five dimensions (scales) of the questionnaire. All level (3) males and females scored higher than level (1) males and females. The total mean score is 119.8 for all subjects. This implies WA that is slightly above average. Moreover, both males and less advanced students manifested higher WA than males and less advanced students. Instructors need to improve their methods of teaching and evaluation to lower student's WA and enhance the conditions conducive to FL learning. Correlation coefficient between the subjects' WA mean scores and their total grade average is (-3630) which supports the view that achievement is correlated negatively with W.A. This implies a consistently inverse relationship between W.A and achievement. More importantly, high apprehensives were low achievers and vice versa, a finding that is in line with the mainstream conclusions of the available research, and proposes W.A as an important variable in EFL writing acquisition.

In addition, Faigley et. al. (1980) aimed to explore the effects of writing apprehension on both writing performance and writing competency. The researchers expected that low apprehensives would perform significantly better on tests of writing competency than high apprehensives. The data of this study were gathered from essays written by the subjects. These were analyzed by subjectively rating them for overall quality and by describing certain internal characteristics of the essays. Besides assessing quality, the researchers examined three syntactic characteristics that are widely used as indices of writing development. These were words per T-unit, words per clause, and the frequency of nonrestrictive modifiers.

The subjects were 110 undergraduate students enrolled in 20 sections of the beginning composition course at a large university in the southwest who completed the Daly-Miller writing apprehension instrument. 55 of the subjects were high apprehensives and other 55 were low apprehensives. The subject also completed a number of standardized measures of writing competency. They also wrote two essays to which performance measures were applied. The instrument used in the study were the writing apprehension instrument and objective measures of writing performance.

The researchers found out that high apperhensives scored lower on tests of writing –related skills. Scores on the objective tests of writing ability reveal that high apperhensives have less command over matters of usage and writing conventions than low apprehensives. Apprehension had a significant effect on writing performance. Highly anxious writers produced essays significantly shorter and less syntactically "mature" or "fluent" than their low-apprehensive counterparts. High apprehensives were unable to develop their ideas as well as low apprehensives. Besides, high apprehensives put less information into each communicative unit, whether at the T-unit or clausal level. Furthermore, high apprehensives used a more restricted repertoire of syntactic construction. Non restrictive modifiers were also found. The characteristics of skilled adult writing appeared less frequently in the prose of high apprehensive.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The problem of the study can be stated in the following major question:

What are the causes and remedies of writing apprehension of Palestinian EFL majors' writing apprehension as perceived by them?

**The following sub questions emanate from the above major one:**

### **Research Questions**

As mentioned earlier, this study is considered as an investigatory one which aims to identify the different factors that arouse Palestinian EFL majors' writing apprehension from the learners' own views and hence suggest suitable remedies for this phenomenon. From displaying and investigating the problem of the study, the following questions which need to be answered by the present study, emerged.

1. What are the factors that instigate and aggravate Palestinian EFL majors' writing apprehension?
2. Do the variables of students' gender, academic level and age play a role in their writing apprehension?
3. What alleviates the degree of these students' writing apprehension?

### **Research Hypotheses**

In the light of the problem of the present study and the research questions that have been raised and after studying the literature related to this area, it is hypothesized that:

...

1. There are statistically significant differences due to the students' gender in their estimates of the factors of writing apprehension.
2. There are statistically significant differences due to the students' gender in their estimates of the remedies of writing apprehension.
3. There are no statistically significant differences attributed to the academic institution variable in the respondents' estimates of the factors of writing apprehension.
4. There are no statistically significant differences attributed to the academic institution variable in the respondents' estimates of the remedies of writing apprehension.
5. There are no statistically significant differences attributed to the students' overall grade in writing courses in their estimates of the factors of writing apprehension.
6. There are no statistically significant differences attributed to the students' overall grade in writing courses in their estimates of the remedies of writing apprehension.
7. There are no statistically significant differences attributed to the respondents' use of computer in writing in their estimates of the factors of writing apprehension.
8. There are no statistically significant differences attributed to the respondents' use of computer in writing in their estimates of the remedies of writing apprehension.

### **Purpose of the Study:**

The purpose of this study was to determine the different factors that may affect Palestinian EFL majors' writing, the level of writing apprehension they experience while practicing writing inside or outside the classroom. The current study also aims to identify the causes of the subjects' writing apprehension from their perspective and procedures that minimize the degree of their writing apprehension.

### **Rationale of the Study:**

Due to the fact that writing is one of the productive skills that enables people to communicate with one another and to express their thoughts and ideas, it is needed everywhere. Therefore, students must realize that they have to possess certain skills that would enable them to cope with the requirements of the technologized world and one of those skills is written communication. However, Palestinian students are observed to struggle

with writing apprehension in their dealings and learning of English as a foreign language.

Teachers always try to develop their students' writing skills, then steps must be taken to decrease this apprehension because apprehension can cause stress, and stress inhibits learning (Mogel, 2005). Exploration of methods to decrease writing apprehension may include integrating technology i.e. using computer and internet facilities in learning and practicing the skill of writing. It may also involve teaching and learning practices, feedback and psychological factors as well, which are thought of to decrease writing apprehension and increase writing ability.

### **Significance of the Study:**

To the researchers' best knowledge, this is one of the unique Palestinian studies on students' writing apprehension. A considerable number of studies dealt with Palestinian EFL learners' writing from error analysis or contrastive analysis perspectives. Those tackled the area of writing linguistically.

In the area of writing apprehension and stress, most of the previous studies are conducted through qualitative methodologies. Hardly did the researchers here find a quantitative study that neutrally elicits students' reasons of anxious psychological status from perspectives other than the students'. Most of the studies provide a list of reasons derived from the subjects' views - not the teachers'. It is argued that this study would provide findings that are closer to students' real feelings since the results could not be manipulated, and the subjects could not be misled through the different ways in which they are questioned about the causes beyond their writing anxiety.

### **Limitations of the Study.**

The following are thought to be some of the study limitations:

1. Due to the fact that Palestinian EFL majors' conditions of learning a FL in the different parts of the Palestinian Occupied Territories are not identical, differences in their reaction to the area of the study is assumed. Then, the generalizability of the findings provided by this study will be limited to Palestinian EFL learners at the universities of Gaza Strip governorates.
2. Instrumentation of the current study is a questionnaire tackling the area of the study from the students' own perspective. Had other instruments such

...

as observation or interview been used, more reliable results might have been reached.

## Methodology

### Participants:

The current study's population comprises all Gaza Strip university students majoring in English. However, the study instruments were distributed to a simple stratified sample, consisting of 265 male and female students from Al-Aqsa University, Al-Quds Open University and Islamic University of Gaza. The subjects were from different academic levels i.e. two students were from the first level, other sixty were from the third level, 125 respondents were from the third level and 78 were from the fourth level. Concerning the subjects' sex, the majority were females; whereas only 75 (28.3%) were males, 190 (71.7%) of them were females. Table (1) below shows the distribution of the subjects according to university and sex as independent variables.

**Table (1): Distribution of Subjects According to University and Sex**

University	No.	Male	%	Female	%	Total
AL-QUDS OPEN UNIVERSITY	103	31	41.40	77	37.90	39.65
ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY-GAZA	75	11	14.60	64	33.70	24.15
AL-AQSA UNIVERSITY	87	33	44.00	54	28.40	36.20
Total	265	75	100	190	100	100

### Instrumentation:

Two questionnaires following the taxonomy of Likert scale in which opinions were graded {strongly agree (1), agree (2), undecided (3), disagree (4) and strongly disagree (5)} have been used to collect the data for the present study. The first one titled 'Causes of apprehension' comprised 32 items divided into six domains and the second titled 'Minimizing writing apprehension' included 24 items distributed to the same six domains (Affective factors, cognitive factors, linguistic factors, teaching practices, feedback and students' behaviors). It is worth mentioning, each questionnaire included an open essay question asking students to add any causes or remedies they think are important. Both questionnaires included five major variables: student sex, academic level, university, overall grade in writing and computer skills.

Adopting split-half method, the researchers used Pearson correlation coefficient to calculate correlation between the questionnaire items which they divided into odd and even;  $R = 0.899$  which is statistically significant at the level  $> 0.01$  for the first questionnaire. For the second questionnaire,  $R = 0.18$  which is also statistically significant at the same level. Accordingly, the study instruments proved reliable. Content validity was also calculated in order to test the consistency of the data collection instruments. Two types of consistency were used i.e. the internal consistency and the construction consistency. The researchers used Pearson correlation coefficient to test the internal consistency between the mark of each item and the whole items of the questionnaire. Those were strongly correlated with each other, which is evidence that the study instrument were valid.

### **Results and Discussion:**

This section deals with analysis of data, presentation of results and discussion and interpretation of these results. It attempts to answer the research questions. It also tests whether the hypotheses of the study will be accepted or rejected. The statistical tests adopted in this study are the T-test independent sample used to show the difference in means between two independent groups, One Way ANOVA, which is adequate for presenting differences between more than two independent groups and Scheffe test to identify the most effective factor. The frequencies were also used to show the frequencies of different variables. It is worth mentioning, the significance level for these statistical measures was set at the conventional (0.05 and 0.01) levels. Results will be presented and discussed in terms of the study hypotheses.

### **The First Hypothesis:**

**There are statistically significant differences due to the students' gender in their estimates of the factors of writing apprehension.**

A T test paired sample was used with each of the six sections of the first questionnaire. The results obtained are presented in table (2) below:



...

**Table (2): Differences due to the students' gender in their estimates of the factors of writing apprehension**

Factors	Sex	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	T value	Sig.
Affective	Male	70	2.6667	.66093	-.924	Not Sig.
	Female	190	2.7596	.73852		
Cognitive	Male	70	2.9585	.73437	-.418	Not Sig.
	Female	190	2.9975	.63949		
Linguistic	Male	70	3.0668	.80681	-1.704	Not Sig.
	Female	190	3.2547	.78142		
Teaching practices	Male	70	2.8175	.80208	-1.426	Not Sig.
	Female	190	2.9748	.78412		
Feedback	Male	70	2.8185	.72123	-2.445	Sig. at 0.05
	Female	190	3.0856	.80221		
Students' behavior	Male	70	2.7774	.70115	-.659	Not Sig.
	Female	190	2.8464	.76469		
Total	Male	70	2.8509	.59388	-1.697	Not Sig.
	Female	190	2.9864	.56251		

As can be noticed in table (2), there are no statistically significant differences due to students' gender in their estimates of the causes of writing apprehension in almost all the questionnaire items. However, a statistically significant difference was in their estimates of feedback factor where T value = (-2.445). The difference was in favor of female students' estimates of causes of writing apprehension. That is to say, females are more apprehensive in comparison with their male counterparts. Feedback either general or personalized which is mostly negative either from their teachers or colleagues on their writings makes the students feel anxious.

Generally speaking, in the Palestinian Arab culture females assume their significance through others' positive points of view towards them. Besides, they are by their very nature sensitive to negative feedback more than males who feel that they have the ability to do away without others' positive attitudes towards them. This, in turn, leads females to withdraw from the scene in the writing classes or at best hate writing. Then it is necessary to look for strategies and techniques which may change the negative feedback into positive. Then, it is obvious that gender plays no effective role in the students' estimates of the causes of writing

apprehension. In other words, the causes which make both male and female students anxious when practicing writing are approximately the same.

The results obtained in the present study are confirmed by some researchers and refuted by others. For instance, Popovich (2003: 10) stated that there is no evidence that there are differences in apprehension due to gender. Daly (1985 cited in Bruce, Gungle and Taylor, 1989: 239) has noted that females have significantly lower levels of writing apprehension than their male counterparts because they get more positive teacher reactions to their writing than do males. Nonetheless, Abdul-Fattah (1995: 6) concluded that his female subjects in general and advanced students in particular experienced more writing apprehension than did males and less advanced students. This result is confirmed by Masny and Foxall (1992:8) who stated "Our results indicated that female subjects were more apprehensive than males". The results of the current study are consistent with those of Daly and Masse and Popovich whereas they contrast those found by Abdul-Fattah and Masny and Foxall.

A number of females in their responses to the open question about other causes for their writing apprehension mentioned that teachers deal harshly with their students' errors in writing. Others mentioned that teachers do not give them feedback about their strengths and weaknesses in writing. Some other female students reported that their bad handwriting makes them stressed when writing. Others mentioned that they are being laughed at by their colleagues or teachers when making mistakes. The majority of students of both sexes emphasized that their lack of proper vocabulary and grammar necessary for writing and writing teachers lacking experience in teaching writing were the prime reasons behind their writing anxiety. This means that students misunderstand the nature of writing; they believe that writing is just mastery of vocabulary and grammar which is erroneous. To sum up, the first hypothesis is totally refuted since no statistically significant differences occurred between male and female students' estimates of the causes of writing apprehension.

### **The Second Hypothesis:**

***There are statistically significant differences due to the students' gender in their estimates of the remedies of writing apprehension.***

The researchers assume that sex is a crucial factor in the students' estimates of the remedies of their writing apprehension. Data related were

...

statistically treated using T test paired sample. The results are summarized in the following table.

**Table (3): Differences due to the students' gender in their estimates of the remedies of writing apprehension**

Factors	Sex	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	T value	Sig. Level
Affective	Male	70	2.5200	.57823.	.927.	Not Sig.
	Female	190	2.4434	.59592.		
Cognitive	Male	70	2.2989	.76904.	2.202	Not Sig.
	Female	190	2.0821	.67902.		
Linguistic	Male	70	2.4425	.84813.	.675	Not Sig.
	Female	190	2.3630	.83961.		
Teaching practices	Male	70	2.5843	.71160.	2.713	Sig. at 0.01
	Female	190	2.3517	.57325.		
Feedback	Male	70	2.3857	.91666.	2.537	Sig. at 0.05
	Female	190	2.1101	.71942.		
Students' behavior	Male	70	2.2164	.58968.	.987	Not Sig.
	Female	190	2.1357	.58314.		
Total	Male	70	2.4080	.53518.	2.382	Sig. at 0.05
	Female	190	2.2476	.46012.		

With reference to table (3) above, there are statistically significant differences between male and female students in favor of the former in their estimates of the remedies of writing apprehension. The differences were mainly in teaching practices and feedback. It is widely thought that teacher is a significant person for female students in particular. From the researchers' experience, female students love to be always praised by their teachers especially male ones.

Differences in the other factors i.e. affective, cognitive, linguistic and student behaviors are not significant. For feedback, T value was 2.537 which indicates that the difference is significant at the level (0.05), whereas that of teaching practices was (2.713) where the difference is significant at the level (0.01). T value of the whole items of the questionnaire was (2.382) which indicate that a statistically significant difference occurred between

male and female students in their estimates of minimizing writing apprehension. Accordingly, the second hypothesis is confirmed.

According to Daly (1985 cited in Bruce, Gungle and Taylor, 1989: 239), female students get more positive teacher reactions to their writing than do their male counterparts. Nevertheless, the results of the present study do not agree with that of Taylor. Male subjects assured that teachers encouraged them to write and were sympathetic with their writings. They added that their writing teachers guided them how to start writing, appreciated their writing and gave them much time to practice writing. Being given the chance to correct their mistakes in writing themselves, and being observed by their colleagues, the students' performance in writing improved.

Females of the present study reported that teachers should encourage them to feel self-confident in what they write, which in turn makes them have positive attitudes towards writing. Others mentioned that teachers should pay much attention to their {females} thoughts and ideas in writing and reward them giving them higher marks to encourage them write. Males, on the other hand, thought that practicing writing more and more and making it as an everyday activity and linking it with wide reading and writing in groups alleviates their writing anxiety.

### **The Third Hypothesis:**

***There are no statistically significant differences attributed to the academic institution variable in the respondents' estimates of the factors of writing apprehension.***

Due to the fact that the students in the different universities of Gaza Strip are approximately exposed to the same course materials and teaching practices besides belonging to the same cultural background, their experience in writing and their reaction are similar. Thus, it is assumed that the subjects' of the present study estimates of causes of writing anxiety are not different. To test the third hypothesis, the researcher applied One Way Anova test to explore the differences between the subjects of the three groups in their estimates of the causes of writing apprehension. Results are presented in table (4).

...

**Table (4): Differences attributed to academic institution variable between the study subjects in their estimates of the causes of writing apprehension**

Factors	Difference	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.	Sig. Level
Affective	Between Groups	1.686	2	.843	1.623	.199	Not Sig.
	Within Groups	136.102	262	.519			
	Total	137.788	264				
Cognitive	Between Groups	1.343	2	.671	1.532	.218	Not Sig.
	Within Groups	114.787	262	.438			
	Total	116.130	264				
Linguistic	Between Groups	2.592	2	1.296	2.089	.126	Not Sig.
	Within Groups	162.578	262	.621			
	Total	165.170	264				
Teaching practices	Between Groups	7.245	2	3.623	6.101	.003	Sig. at (0.01)
	Within Groups	155.571	262	.594			
	Total	162.817	264				
Feedback	Between Groups	3.215	2	1.607	2.639	.073	Not Sig.
	Within Groups	159.566	262	.609			
	Total	162.781	264				
Students' behavior	Between Groups	1.060	2	.530	.951	.388	Not Sig.
	Within Groups	145.950	262	.557			
	Total	147.010	264				
Total	Between Groups	2.453	2	1.227	3.821	.023	Sig. at (0.05)
	Within Groups	84.095	262	.321			
	Total	86.548	264				

According to the results obtained in table (4), it was found that there is difference in favor of The Islamic University of Gaza students in their estimates of the causes of their writing apprehension compared to those of Al-Aqsa University. Applying Scheffe test to explore the most effective factor, the difference was mainly in teaching practices, where  $F = (6.101)$  and  $\text{sig.} = (.003)$ , which is significant at the level (0.01). Faculty of the Islamic University of Gaza adopt rigid teaching practices in the sense that they require their students to work harder and expect too much from them, particularly when they provide them with challenging materials and ways of teaching. It is widely perceived that the Islamic University of Gaza is the best teaching environment in Gaza Strip. Islamic University of Gaza students reported that writing teachers should vary the sources of writing materials. Some claimed that their writing did not improve particularly when learning the course of 'Advanced Writing'. They thought that it is due to the fact that this course is taught theoretically rather than practically.

On the other hand, no statistically significant differences occurred between the students of the three universities in the other factors. Nevertheless, there are statistically significant differences at the level (0.05) between the study subjects due to the academic institution they belong to in their estimates of the causes of writing apprehension in general. All in all, it is safe to say that the third hypothesis was strongly refuted.

For the subjects academic level (being sophomores, juniors or seniors), the statistical results showed no differences in their estimates to the causes of their writing apprehension in all the items of the second questionnaire. It was found that ( $F = 1.036$  and  $\text{sig.} = 0.377$ ), which is statistically insignificant difference

#### **The Fourth Hypothesis:**

***There are no statistically significant differences attributed to the academic institution variable in the respondents' estimates of the remedies of writing apprehension..***

To test this hypothesis, One Way Anova test and Scheffe test were used to compare the means of the students' estimates of the remedies of their writing anxiety due to the universities they belong to. The following table presents a comparison in the six factors included in the second questionnaire distributed and the total one.

...

**Table (5): Differences attributed to academic institution variable between the study subjects in their estimates of the remedies of writing apprehension**

	Difference	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.	Sig. Level
Affective	Between Groups	1.099	2	.843	1.592	.206 0	Not Sig.
	Within Groups	90.446	262	.519			
	Total	91.545	264				
Cognitive	Between Groups	1.918	2	.671	1.901	.151 0	Not Sig.
	Within Groups	132.189	262	.438			
	Total	134.107	264				
Linguistic	Between Groups	7.835	2	1.296	5.800	.003 0	Sig. at (0.01)
	Within Groups	176.942	262	.621			
	Total	184.777	264				
Teaching practices	Between Groups	4.868	2	3.623	6.648	.002 0	Sig. at (0.01)
	Within Groups	95.920	262	.594			
	Total	100.788	264				
Feedback	Between Groups	6.105	2	1.607	5.065	0.007	Sig. at (0.01)
	Within Groups	157.879	262	.609			
	Total	163.983	264				
Students' behavior	Between Groups	3.697	2	.530	5.662	0.004	Sig. at (0.01)
	Within Groups	85.544	262	.557			
	Total	89.242	264				
Total	Between Groups	3.300	2	1.227	7.381	0.001	Sig. at (0.01)
	Within Groups	58.572	262	.321			
	Total	61.872	264				

Table (5) shows that there are statistically significant differences due to university variable between the study subjects in all second questionnaire items, i.e. their estimates of the remedies of their writing apprehension. Comparing the means of responses of the three groups, it was found that the differences were in favor of the Islamic University of Gaza students,  $F =$

(7.381), sig. = (0.001), which is significant at the level (0.01). The differences were mainly in the students' estimates of linguistic factors, { $F = (5.800)$ , sig. = (0.003)}, teaching practices, { $F = (6.648)$ , sig. = (0.002)} feedback { $F = (5.65)$ , sig. = (0.007)} and students' behaviors { $F = (5.662)$ , sig. = (0.004)} at the significant level of (0.01). It is worth mentioning, no statistically significant differences existed in affective factors, { $F = (1.592)$ , sig. = (0.206)} and cognitive factors { $F = (1.901)$ , sig. = (0.151)}. The results, no doubt, disconfirm the fourth hypothesis.

Concerning the results obtained in this section, the subjects might have responded regarding the teaching and learning practices they received at their respective universities. For instance, those who are not satisfied with the feedback they got from their teachers or colleagues when practicing writing, would emphasize choosing feedback factor as a remedy for their writing apprehension. Then, it could be inferred that the students of the three universities are satisfied with the affective and cognitive factors. That is to say, they need no much affective and cognitive support when writing. Almost all of them showed that they were self-confident with their knowledge and information on the topic they write on.

Most university students agreed that writing on familiar and enjoyable topics which may sometimes not be related to their course material minimizes the degree of their writing apprehension and makes them feel relaxed when practicing writing. Discussing the topic orally with the teacher in the classroom before writing on it, giving more information about the topic, teaching them about FL culture, giving them models of writing essays and concentrating on the process rather than the product of writing were among the students' different suggestions that minimize their apprehension when practicing writing. Students also recommended being taught writing courses by English native speakers. Moreover, they feel that doing writing for the sake of writing not for the sake of marks alleviates their writing anxiety. Concerning their academic level, the subjects showed no difference in their estimates of the remedies of writing apprehension ; ( $F = 0.980$  and sig. = 0.403 ) except for Linguistic factors ( $F = 3.019$  and sig. = 0.030) where statistically significant differences existed in favor of juniors.

### **The Fifth Hypothesis:**

**There are no statistically significant differences attributed to the**



...

**students' overall grade in writing in their estimates of the factors of writing apprehension.**

In order to test this hypothesis, One Way ANOVA test was used to compare between the differences of sample responses due to the overall grade in writing courses in their estimates of the factors of writing apprehension. Students were asked to indicate their overall grade in the writing courses they had. Four choices i.e. fair, good, very good and excellent were provided for them to tick the one which suited them best. The following table summarizes the results related to this hypothesis.

**Table (6): Differences attributed to the students' overall grade in writing courses in their estimates of the factors of writing apprehension**

Factors	Difference	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.	Sig. Level
Affective	Between Groups	11.715	2	3.905	8.084	.000.	Sig. at (0.01)
	Within Groups	126.074	262	483.			
	Total	137.788	264				
Cognitive	Between Groups	6.041	2	2.014	4.774	.003.	Sig. at (0.01)
	Within Groups	110.089	262	422.			
	Total	116.130	264				
Linguistic	Between Groups	14.534	2	4.845	8.394	.000.	Sig. at (0.01)
	Within Groups	150.636	262	577.			
	Total	165.170	264				
Teaching practices	Between Groups	.908	2	303.	488.	.691.	Not Sig.
	Within Groups	161.909	262	620.			
	Total	162.817	264				
Feedback	Between Groups	1.656	2	552.	894.	.445.	Not Sig.
	Within Groups	161.125	262	617.			
	Total	162.781	264				
Students' behavior	Between Groups	8.051	2	2.684	5.041	.002.	Sig. at (0.01)
	Within Groups	138.959	262	532.			
	Total	147.010	264				
Total	Between Groups	5.705	2	1.902	6.140	.000.	Sig. at (0.01)

The results presented in table (6) above show that there are statistically significant differences attributed to their achievement in the writing courses they were exposed to in all first questionnaire items, i.e. their estimates of the causes of their writing apprehension. Comparing the means of responses using Scheffe test to identify the most effective factor, it was found that the differences were in favor of those who are very good or excellent achievers in writing courses in comparison with those whose achievement is either fair or good  $F = (6.140)$ ,  $\text{sig.} = (0.000)$ , which is significant at the level (0.01). Do the results obtained here mean that high achievers in writing are more apprehensive and low ones are less apprehensive? The answer for this question in the light of the present study results is emphatically yes. This means that high achievers are very concerned with each of the factors that may affect or apprehend their fluency in writing, meanwhile low achievers do not bother themselves to identify the factors that lead to their writing apprehension.

The differences were mainly in the students' estimates of affective factors  $\{F = (8.084), \text{sig.} = (0.000)\}$ , cognitive factors,  $\{F = (4.774), \text{sig.} = (0.003)\}$ , linguistic factors  $\{F = (8.394), \text{sig.} = (0.000)\}$  and students' behaviors  $\{F = (5.041), \text{sig.} = (0.002)\}$  at the significant level of (0.05). It is worth mentioning, no statistically significant differences existed in teaching practices,  $\{F = (0.488), \text{sig.} = (0.691)\}$  and feedback  $\{F = (0.894), \text{sig.} = (0.445)\}$ . The results, no doubt, disconfirm the fourth hypothesis.

In accordance with the results presented here, the fifth hypothesis is refuted since statistically significant differences existed between the study subjects due to their achievement in writing courses. Both writing specialists and psychologists were interested in identifying the relationship between writing anxiety and poor writing quality and performance. For instance, Faigley, Daly and Witte (1981) could not reach a decisive conclusion. They believed that though their study demonstrated that apprehension played some role in writing performance and competence, it was important to note that no causality was assumed. In other words, writing apprehension was not assumed causally to lead to poorer writing, nor was poorer writing assumed to causally result in apprehension. However, Abdel Latif (2007: 60) reached the conclusion that writing apprehension is the result of lack of linguistic competence and writing skill. Likewise, Clark (2005:8) concluded that writing apprehension is a result of lacking knowledge or understanding

...

necessary to complete the writing task and the students' belief that writing is hard work.

It is clear that the results of the current study are quite strange; they did not agree or disagree with those of the previous studies. Where Faigley, Daly and Witte could not reach a conclusion in this concern, Abdel Latif and Clark found that writing apprehension is connected with poor performance or knowledge of writing. Further, Masny and Foxal (1992) found that higher achievers in writing scored lower on the writing apprehension questionnaire, i.e. there were less apprehensives than the low achieving writers. Quite strangely, very good and excellent achievers in writing amongst the subjects of the present study were more apprehensives in comparison with those who are good or poor achievers. Nevertheless, Abdul-Fattah (1995: 6) concluded that his female subjects in general and advanced students experienced more writing apprehension than did males and less advanced students. This result is consistent with that of the current study. Besides, Reeves (1997 , 15 ) argued:

"We now know that both high-achieving and low-achieving writers can be apprehensive. Even teachers are apprehensives. Even professional writers are apprehensives. The best way to get over it is to sit down and write something; anything will do just to get started."

#### **The Sixth Hypothesis:**

**There are no statistically significant differences attributed to the students' overall grade in writing courses in their estimates of the remedies of writing apprehension.**

To test the sixth hypothesis, the researcher applied one way ANOVA test to explore the differences between the subjects of the study with reference to their achievement in writing in their estimates of the remedies of writing apprehension. Results are presented in table (7).

**Table (7): Differences attributed to the students' overall grade in writing courses in their estimates of the remedies of writing apprehension.**

Factors	Difference	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.	Sig. Level
Affective	Between Groups	1.415	2	472.	1.365	0.254	Not Sig.
	Within Groups	90.130	262	345.			
	Total	91.545	264				
Cognitive	Between Groups	613.	2	204.			Not Sig.

	Within Groups	133.493	262	511.	0.400	0.753	
	Total	134.107	264				
Linguistic	Between Groups	1.796	2	599.	0.854	0.466	Not Sig.
	Within Groups	182.981	262	701.			
	Total	184.777	264				
Teaching practices	Between Groups	899.	2	300.	0.783	0.504	Not Sig.
	Within Groups	99.889	262	383.			
	Total	100.788	264				
Feedback	Between Groups	2.418	2	806.	1.302	0.274	Not Sig.
	Within Groups	161.566	262	619.			
	Total	163.983	264				
Students' behavior	Between Groups	1.087	2	362.	1.073	0.361	Not Sig.
	Within Groups	88.155	262	338.			
	Total	89.242	264				
Total	Between Groups	692.	2	231.	0.984	0.401	Not Sig.
	Within Groups	61.180	262	0.234			
	Total	61.872	264				

As we can see in table (7) above, there are no statistically significant differences between the means of the study subjects due to their overall grade in writing in their estimates of the remedies of their writing apprehension  $\{F = (0.984), \text{Sig.} = (0.401)\}$ , which is not significant at the level (0.05). It is also obvious that no statistically significant differences occurred due to the subjects' achievement in writing in their estimates of any of the factors that may minimize their writing anxiety. As a result, the sixth hypothesis is totally confirmed.

Naturally, students whether high or low achievers do not differ in their estimates of the remedies of their writing apprehension due to the fact that the remedies suggested in the second questionnaire are deeply anchored in the literature of psychology and that of teaching writing.

#### **The Seventh Hypothesis:**

**There are no statistically significant differences attributed to the respondents' use of computer in writing in their estimates of the factors of writing apprehension.**

To test the seventh hypothesis, the researchers applied one way ANOVA test to explore the differences between the subjects due to their use of computer in writing in their estimates of the causes of writing apprehension. Results are presented in table (8) below.

...

**Table (8): Differences attributed to the subjects' use of computer in their estimates of the causes of writing apprehension**

Factors	Difference	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.	Sig. Level
Affective	Between Groups	410.	2	137.	260.	854.	Not Sig.
	Within Groups	136.254	262	526.			
	Total	136.664	264				
Cognitive	Between Groups	1.812	2	604.	1.374	251.	Not Sig.
	Within Groups	113.823	262	439.			
	Total	115.635	264				
Linguistic	Between Groups	561.	2	187.	301.	825.	Not Sig.
	Within Groups	161.002	262	622.			
	Total	161.564	264				
Teaching practices	Between Groups	1.620	2	540.	874.	455.	Not Sig.
	Within Groups	160.051	262	618.			
	Total	161.671	264				
Feedback	Between Groups	2.443	2	814.	1.330	265.	Not Sig.
	Within Groups	158.587	262	612.			
	Total	161.030	264				
Students' behavior	Between Groups	2.411	2	804.	1.475	222.	Not Sig.
	Within Groups	141.122	262	545.			
	Total	143.533	264				
Total	Between Groups	857.	2	286.	877.	453.	Not Sig.
	Within Groups	84.308	262	326.			
	Total	85.165	264				

Advocates of computer use in composition classes often argue that using computers will reduce writing apprehension, improve attitudes toward writing, and make the writing process easier for students. This should also hold true for second language writers, whose attitudes toward writing and English may include more fear and apprehension than those of first language writers (Betancourt & Phinney, 1988).

Nonetheless, it is assumed that the subjects' of the present study estimates of the causes of their writing anxiety are not affected by their access to the use of computer in their writings. According to the results obtained in table (8), it was found that there were no statistically significant differences due to the subjects' use of computer in writing in their estimates of the causes of writing apprehension  $\{F= 0.877, \text{Sig} = 0.453\}$ . Applying Scheffe test to explore the most effective factor, no difference in any of the factors that cause writing apprehension existed. Accordingly, it is safe to say that the seventh hypothesis was completely accepted.

Researchers have argued that computer use in composition helps to reduce anxiety about writing and premature editing (Daiute, 1985, 1986). Computer also changes revision strategies (Daiute, 1986; Hawisher, 1987), and improves attitudes towards writing (Dalton & Hannafin, 1987; Hawisher, 1987). However, little research has appeared on the effect of computer use on writing apprehension or on blocking.

The study subjects were asked how often they use computer in working out their assignment papers and to answer either, never, sometimes, often or always. The purpose here is to explore the relationship between the use of computer and the writer's writing apprehension. Their responses showed that the majority never or sometimes does and even those who often or always use computer in writing were not different in their estimates of the causes of writing apprehension.

#### **The Eighth Hypothesis:**

**There are no statistically significant differences attributed to the respondents' use of computer in writing in their estimates of the remedies of writing apprehension.**

This time, it is assumed that the subjects' of the present study estimates to the remedies of their writing anxiety are not affected by their access to the use of computer in their writing. To test the eighth hypothesis, the researcher applied One Way Anova test to explore the differences

...

between the subjects due to their use of computer in writing in their estimates of the causes of writing apprehension. Results are presented in the following table:

**Table (9): Differences attributed to the subjects' use of computer in their estimates of the remedies of writing apprehension**

Factors	Difference	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.	Sig. Level
Affective	Between Groups	258.	2	086.	245.	865.	Not Sig.
	Within Groups	90.984	262	351.			
	Total	91.242	264				
Cognitive	Between Groups	1.908	2	636.	1.249	293.	Not Sig.
	Within Groups	131.905	262	509.			
	Total	133.813	264				
Linguistic	Between Groups	507.	2	169.	238.	870.	Not Sig.
	Within Groups	183.971	262	710.			
	Total	184.477	264				
Teaching practices	Between Groups	1.947	2	649.	1.704	167.	Not Sig.
	Within Groups	98.650	262	381.			
	Total	100.597	264				
Feedback	Between Groups	4.481	2	1.494	2.426	066.	Not Sig.
	Within Groups	159.434	262	616.			
	Total	163.915	264				
Students' behavior	Between Groups	1.909	2	636.	1.891	131.	Not Sig.
	Within Groups	87.146	262	336.			
	Total	89.055	264				
Total	Between Groups	960.	2	320.	1.362	255.	Not Sig.
	Within Groups	60.872	262	235.			
	Total	61.832	264				

Table (9) shows that there were no statistically significant differences due to the subjects' use of computer in writing in their estimates of the causes of writing apprehension {F= 1.362, Sig = 0.255}. Applying Scheffe test to explore the most effective factor, no difference in any of the factors that alleviate writing apprehension existed. Consequently, the eighth hypothesis was completely accepted.

On the other hand, Sullivan and Pratt (1999) stated "Our findings support previous research showing positive effects for the use of networked computers in writing classrooms." Researchers have argued that computer use in composition helps to reduce anxiety about writing and premature editing (Daiute, 1985, 1986). Computer also changes revision strategies

(Daiute, 1986; Hawisher, 1987), and improves attitudes towards writing (Dalton & Hannafin, 1987; Hawisher, 1987). However, little research has appeared on the effect of computer use on writing apprehension or on blocking.

It is obvious that the results of the present study concerning the use of computer in writing are not consistent with those of Sullivan and Pratt, Daiute, Hawisher, and Dalton and Hannafin. This, might be attributed to the fact that Palestinian academic institutions adopted the use of technology in education very recently whereas computer and technology were adopted in the West in teaching and learning writing in 1980'. Our students are still taught at universities to write in the traditional ways, i.e. using a pen or a pencil and paper. This would have affected their responses to the second questionnaire.

Warschauer (2010) recommended using new technologies in teaching second language writing since they can help teachers and students alike. He mentioned four tools that can help in writing instruction namely, blogs, wikis, automated essay scoring and open-source netbooks. Similarly, a considerable number of the subjects of the present study in their responses to the open essay question suggested adopting computer and internet in teaching and learning writing as a means of minimizing their anxiety in writing. Others suggested practicing chats on the internet as a weekly active work to express their thoughts, which minimizes their writing apprehension.

### **Conclusion:**

In this technologized world, writing is getting more and more important for communication among people and for individuals in their careers. Writing is necessary since it is needed to convey feelings, messages and meanings through modern technological tools such as emails, faxes, blogs...etc. Then anything blocks writing may in turn affect one's career or status. The current quantitative and qualitative research focusing on inspecting the major causes and consequently remedies of the students' writing apprehension disclosed that the factors with regard to teaching practices, negative feedback, linguistic, cognitive and affective factors are the most significant key elements, which researchers should pay attention to.



...

**The present study has come up with the following findings:**

1. Students' sex played no crucial role in their estimates of writing apprehension except for the factor of feedback where the difference was in favor of females. That is to say females were more sensitive to their teachers' feedback than males. Nevertheless, a statistically significant difference in favor of females existed in their estimates of the remedies of writing apprehension particularly in teaching practices and feedback.
2. Students' academic level, i.e. sophomore, junior or senior did not impact their estimates of the causes of writing apprehension nor did it affect their estimates of the remedies of writing apprehension except for linguistic factor where the difference was in favor of juniors.
3. Islamic University of Gaza students were more apprehensive than those of Al-Quds Open University and Al-Aqsa University particularly in teaching practices. Moreover, there was a statistically significant difference in favor of the same group of students in their estimates of the remedies of writing apprehension.
4. High achievers in writing courses were more apprehensive than low ones. No differences between them existed in their estimates of the remedies of writing apprehension.
5. Computer use in writing played no significant role neither in the students' estimates of the causes nor of the remedies of writing apprehension.

It is worth mentioning, the current study was mainly concerned with identifying the factors that affect Palestinian University English majors' writing apprehension. Then, writing teachers should vary their teaching practices, reward good performers in writing and always give positive feedback in order to improve their students' writing performance through more appropriate teacher training and curriculum design.

**Recommendations:**

In the light of the study findings and the study limitations, the researchers set the following recommendations:

1. Writing teachers are recommended to vary their strategies and techniques of teaching writing using modern technologies and getting rid of some traditional ways of teaching writing.
2. They are also recommended to teach writing for the sake of writing-not for the sake of exams and evaluation. Their comments should mostly be positive thereby minimizing negative comments on their students' writings.

3. Teachers are also advised to motivate their students to write and to reward good performers.
4. Course designers should take into consideration that writing should be an everyday activity in and even outside the classroom.
5. Students are advised to practice writing and to write constantly about topics they know well and have sufficient information about.
6. Students must build up a mental database of vocabulary and grammar which enables them to express their thoughts and ideas in writing. Other scholars are recommended to explore other causes of students' writing apprehension such as the social and economic factors.
7. It is recommended to incorporate writing clinics in English departments in Palestinian universities to provide students with help whenever needed. It is worth mentioning that writing centers and clinics are widespread in American and European universities.
8. Writing courses should be taught only by writers or instructors who are writing specialists- not by general English Language specialists.

### References:

- 1- Abd Rahim, Mohammed. *The Effectiveness of a Suggested program for improving the Academic Writing Skills of English Department students at Al Aqsa university in Gaza*, unpublished PhD thesis. The joint program between Al Aqsa university and Ain Shams university.
- 2- Abdel Latif, M.. " Factors Accounting for Egyptian EFL University Students Negative Writing Affect ". *Essex Graduate Student Papers in Language and Linguistics*, 2007, 9: 57-82.
- 3- Abdul-Fattah, H.S. " FL Writing Apprehension of University Students ". Mu'tah Lil-Buhooth Wa Al-Dirasat. Mu'tah University, 1995, 10 (5).
- 4- Abu Shawish, J. *Analysis and Assessment of Palestinian EFL Majors' Written English*. Unpublished Ph. D. Thesis. Sudan University of Science and Technology, Sudan. 2009.
- 5- Bernstein, A. " Errors and Expectations: A guide for the Teacher of Basic Writing " 1978. Shaughnessy. *The School Review*, 86 (2): 292-294.
- Betancourt, F. & Phinney, M. " Sources of writing block in bilingual writers ". *Written Communication*, 1988, 5(4): 461-478.
- 6- Bloom, L. Z. *The Composing Process of Anxious and Non-anxious Writers : A naturalistic Study*. 1980, Annual Meeting of the Conference on College Composition and Communication. Washington, D. C.

...

- 7- Boice, R. " Combining Writing Block Treatment: Theory and Practice " . Behavioristic Research Therapy, 1992, 30 (2): 107-116.
- 8- Boice, R. " Writing Blocks and Tacit Knowledge " . The Journal of Higher Education, 1993, 63(1):19-54.
- 9- Borich, G. D. Effective Teaching Methods. Fifth Edition. New Jersey. 2004.
- 10- Bruce, W., Gungle, B. W. and Taylor, V. " Writing Apprehension and Second Language Writers " in Richness in Writing: Empowering ESL Students' editing: Donna M. Johnson and Duane H. Roen. Longman New York and London. 1989
- 11- Cheng, H. and Schallert. " Writing Anxiety: Differentiating Writing and Speaking Components " . Language Learning, 1999, 49 (3).
- 12- Clark, D. " Explorations into Writing Anxiety: Helping Students Overcome their Fears and Focus on Learning ". ISSOTL Conference. 2005.
- 13- Daiute, C. Writing and Computers. Menlo Park: Addison-Wesley. 1985
- 14- Daiute, C. " Physical and cognitive factors in revising: Insights from studies with computers ". Research in the Teaching of English, 1986, 20, 141-159.
- 15- Dalton, D. W. & Hannafin, M. J. " The effects of word processing on written composition ". Journal of Educational Research, 1987, 80, 338-342.
- Daly, J. " Writing Apprehension and Writing Competency ". Journal of Education Research, 1978, 72 (1): 10-14.
- 16- Daly J. and Miller, M. D. " Apprehension of Writing as A predictor of Message Intensity ". The Journal of Psychology, 1975, 89:173-177.
- 17- Daud, N. M., and Abu Kassim, N. L. " Second Language Writing Anxiety: Cause or Effect ". 2005, Malaysian Journal of ELT.
- 18- Dickson, K. J. " Free Writing Prompts and Feedback ". The Internet TESL Journal, 2001, 7 (8).
- 19- Faigley, L., Daly, J. and Witte, S. T. " The Role of Writing Apprehension in Writing Performance and Competence ". Journal of Education Research, 1991,71(1): 17-20.
- 20- Fritzsche, B. A.,Youn, B. R. and Hickson. " Individual Differences in 21- Academic Procrastination Tendency and Writing Success ". Personality and Individual Differences. 2003.
- 22- Grabe, W. and Kaplan, R. B. Theory and Practice of Writing. Longman, London.1996.
- 23- Grundy, D. " Writing Anxiety ". The Arts in Psychotherapy, 1985,12: 151-156. Ankho International Inc. Printed in the U.S.A.

2012

- 24- Gungle, B. and Taylor, V. Writing Apprehension and Second Language Writers. Edited by Donna, M. Johnson. Richness in Writing. Longman, USA. 1989.
- 25- Harrison, M. E. " Writing Anxiety" . Retrieved from: [www.eric.gov.ed](http://www.eric.gov.ed). 2006.
- 26- Hassan, B. " The Relationship of Writing Apprehension and Self-esteem to the Writing Quality and Quantity of EFL University Students ". Mansoura Faculty of Education Journal, 2001, 39: 1-36.
- 27- Hawisher, G. E. (1987). The effects of word processing on the revision strategies of college freshmen. Research in the Teaching of English, 21, 145-159.
- 28- Hawisher, G. E. " Research and recommendations for computers and composition" . in G. E. Hawisher and C. L. Selfe (Eds.), Critical perspectives on computers and composition instruction, pp. 44-69. New York: Teacher's College Press, 1989.
- 29- Huwari, Ibrahim Fathi, and Abd Aziz, Noor Hasima 2011. " Writing Apprehension in English Among Jordanian Post Graduate Students at Universiti Utara Malaysia " Academic Research International, 2011, Vol 1, issue 2, Sep.
- 30- Feng Lan, Yu, Ling Hung, Chun, and Ju Hsu, Hung, " Effects of Guided Writing Strategies on Students Writing Attitudes Based on Media Richness Theory ". TOJET, October 2011, Vol 10, issue 4.
- 31- Kharmah, N. and Bakir, M. Introduction to Linguistics (5351). Al-Quds Open University Publications, Jordan, 2003.
- 32- Krause, K .L. " The university Essay Writing Experience: A pathway for Academic Interaction during Transition " Higher Education Research and Development, 2001, 20 (2): 147-168.
- 33- Kurk, G. and Atay, D. " Students' Writing Apprehension " . Journal of Theory and Practice in Education, 3(1):12-23.
- 34- Masny, D. and Foxall, J. (1992). " Writing Apprehension in L2 ". Retrieved from: [www.eric.gov.ed](http://www.eric.gov.ed), 2007.
- 35- Maria-Rankin, B. " Addressing Writing Apprehension in Adult English Language Learners ". CATESOL State Conference, 2006.
- 36- Masse, M. and Popvich, M. " Individual Assessment of Media Writing Student Attitudes: Recasting the Riff and Stacks Writing Apprehension

...

- Measure ". Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly, 2003, 82 (2): 339 – 355.
- 37- Raimes, A. " Techniques in Teaching Writing ". TESOL Quarterly, 1984, 36, 535-538.
- 38- Rankin-Brown, M. " Addressing Writing Apprehension in Adult English Language Learners ". CATESOL State Conference, 2006.
- Reeves, L. L. (1997). Minimizing Apprehension in the Learner Centered Classroom. The English journal, 86: 38-45.
- 39- Smith, M. W. Reducing Writing Apprehension Urbana,IL: NCTE, 1984.
- 40- Sommers, N. "Across the Drafts". College Composition and Communication, 2006, 58 (2): 248-257.
- Southwell, M. G. " Free Writing Composition Classes " College English, 1977, 8 (7): 676-681.
- 41- Stapa , S. H. and Abul Majid A. H. " The Use of First Language in Developing Ideas in Second Language Writing ". European Journal of Social Sciences, 2009, 7 (4).
- 42- Stolpa, J. M. " Math and Writing Anxiety ". Phi Kappa Phi Forum, 2004, 84 (3).
- 43- Stover, K. " Riposte: In Defense of Free Writing ". The English Journal, 1988, 77 (2): 61-62.
- 44- Sullivan, N. and Pratt, E. " A comparative study of two ESL writing environments: A computer-assisted classroom and a traditional oral classroom " . System , 1996, 24 (4 ) : 491-501.
- 45- The Writing Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. (2009). Writing Anxiety. <http://www.unc.edu/debts/wc> web.
- 46- Thompson, M. O. Classroom Techniques for Reducing " Writing Anxiety: A study of several cases ". Paper presented at the annual conference on College Composition and Communication, Washington, D.C. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 188 661), 1980
- 47- Veit, R. (1990). Reducing Anxiety in Writing Instruction. Annual Meeting of the National Council of Teachers of English. Cincinnati, CH.
- 48- Wachholz, P. and Eitheridge, C. " Speaking for themselves: Writing Self-efficacy Beliefs of High and Low Apprehensive Writers ". Journal of Developmental Education, 1996, 19 (3).
- 48- Walsh, S. H. " Writers' Fears and Creative Inclinations ; How do they Affect Composition Quality? ". Annual Spring Conference of the National Council of English. Washington, D.C, 1992.