# JORDANIAN PhD STUDENTS' EFL WRITING APPREHENSION

## IBRAHIM FATHI MOHAMMAD HUWARI

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# Abstrak

Kajian mengenai kebimbangan menulis yang dialami oleh pelajar yang bahasa ibundanya bahasa Inggeris telah dijalankan secara meluas. Namun, kajian yang sedemikian dalam kalangan pelajar yang mempelajari bahasa Inggeris sebagai bahasa asing (EFL) masih agak terbatas. Malah, kajian yang meneliti kebimbangan menulis yang dialami oleh pelajar siswazah EFL, khususnya kajian yang melibatkan wacana akademik amat terhad. Oleh itu, kajian ini memberi tumpuan terhadap kebimbangan menulis yang dialami oleh pelajar EFL Jordan semasa menulis tesis PhD di Malaysia. Kajian ini bermatlamat untuk meneroka penyebab kepada kebimbangan menulis, menerangkan kesan kebimbangan menulis dan mengenal pasti strategi yang digunakan oleh pelajar PhD dari Jordan untuk mengurangkan kebimbangan menulis. Dua teori diupayakan dalam kajian ini, iaitu Teori Afektif dan Teori Sosio-kognitif. Tiga teknik pengumpulan data digunakan dalam kajian kes kualitatif ini, iaitu temu bual yang diadakan dengan 21 orang pelajar PhD dari Jordan, temu bual yang dikendalikan dengan sembilan orang penyelia dan analisis sembilan kertas cadangan PhD. Empat tema utama yang berkaitan dengan penyebab kebimbangan menulis diperlihatkan, iaitu kurang pengetahuan tentang struktur bahasa Inggeris, Sikap negatif terhadap penulisan, Pengalaman menulis yang negatif pada masa lampau dan pengetahuan yang terbatas dalam penulisan akademik. Kesan peribadi, kesan sosial dan kesan akademik merupakan tiga tema yang terhasil berhubung dengan kesan kebimbangan menulis. Empat strategi telah diupayakan untuk mengurangkan kebimbangan menulis, iaitu strategi tingkah laku, strategi ulasan pakar dan maklum balas, strategi kognitif dan strategi afektif. Kajian ini menyimpulkan bahawa kebimbangan menulis merupakan fenomena yang lazim dalam kalangan pelajar yang dikaji. Kesemua pelajar mengaku mengalami tahap tertentu dalam kebimbangan menulis mereka sama ada pada tahap rendah, sederhana atau tinggi. Kajian ini menyumbang kepada kosa ilmu berhubung kebimbangan menulis, khususnya penyebab, kesan dan strategi. Kajian turut mengetengahkan faktor dalaman dan faktor luaran yang mempengaruhi kebimbangan menulis.


**Kata kunci**: Kebimbangan menulis, Bahasa Inggeris sebagai bahasa asing, Teori Afektif, Teori Sosio-kognitif
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# Abstract

Although studies on writing apprehension on native learners of English have been done extensively, studies on English as a foreign language (EFL) learners are scant. In fact, limited studies have examined writing apprehension experienced by EFL postgraduate learners, in particular written academic discourse. Therefore, the study focused on writing apprehension experienced by Jordanian EFL learners when writing their PhD thesis in Malaysia. The objectives of the study were to explore the causes of writing apprehension, to explain the effects of writing apprehension, and to identify the strategies that the Jordanian PhD students used to reduce writing apprehension. Two theories were used in this study, namely Affective theory and socio-cognitive theory. In this qualitative case study, three techniques of data collection were used: interviewing 21 Jordanian PhD students, interviewing nine supervisors, and also analysing nine PhD proposals. Four main themes emerged pertaining to causes of writing apprehension which are Lack of knowledge in English structure, Negative attitude toward writing, Negative writing experience in the past, and Inadequate knowledge in academic writing. Three main themes which emerged in relation to the effects of writing apprehension were Personal effects, Social effects, and Academic effects. In relation to the strategies employed to reduce writing apprehension, four main strategies were found. They are Behavior strategy, Expert review and feedback strategy, Cognitive strategy, and Affective strategy. The study concluded that writing apprehension was a prevalent phenomenon among the students. All the students admitted experiencing a certain level of writing apprehension either low, moderate or high level. The study contributes to the body of knowledge on writing apprehension related to causes, effects and coping strategies. It highlights internal and external factors which contribute to writing apprehension.


**Keywords**: Writing apprehension, English as a Foreign Language, Affective Theory, Socio-cognitive Theory

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# List of Abbreviations

**WA** ---------------------------------------------------------------- Writing Apprehension

**CA** --------------------------------------------------------- Communication Apprehension

**WAT** ------------------------------------------------------------ Writing Apprehension Test

**SLWAT** ---------------------------------- Second Language Writing Apprehension Test

**SLA** ------------------------------------------------------- Second Language Acquisition

**ESL** -------------------------------------------------------- English as a Second Language

**EFL** -------------------------------------------------------- English as a Foreign Language

**L1** ---------------------------------------------------------------------- First Language

**L2** --------------------------------------------------------------------- Second Language

**NS** ------------------------------------------------------------------------ Native Speakers

**NNS** ------------------------------------------------------------------ Non- Native Speakers

**UUM** ------------------------------------------------------ Universiti Utara Malaysia

**UUMCAS** ------------------------------------------- UUM College of Arts & Sciences

**UUMCOB** ------------------------------------------------ UUM College of Business

**UUMCOLGIS** ------- UUM College Of Law, Government and International Studies

**MoHE** -------------------------------------------------- Ministry of Higher Education

**DOI** ------------------------------------------------------- Digital Objective Identifier

**MOE** ------------------------------------------------------------- Ministry of Education

# CHAPTER ONE

# INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background of the Study

English is a vital language. It plays an important role in two ways: education and business. Nowadays, most universities in the world use English language as the medium of instruction. Learning English language may help students to perform well in their academic studies (Kirkpatrick, 2011). English language involves four language skills: writing, reading, listening, and speaking. It has been found in many studies that most second language learners believe that writing is one of the most difficult language skills to master (Kurk & Atay, 2007; Latif, 2007; and MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989). In addition, writing is not an easy task to do because it is a sophisticated skill compared with other skills (Abu Shawish & Atea, 2010; Daud, Daud & Abu Kassim, 2005).

English as a Second Language (ESL)/English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners face problems when writing in English such as writing their ideas clearly, organizing the writing, making grammatical mistakes, and having fear of writing itself. In other words, writing is an activity that needs mental effort to think out, combine and arrange sentences to produce meaningful ideas. It is not a skill to be learned in isolation from the other language skills: listening, speaking and reading (Al-Sobh & Al-Abed Al-Haq, 2012). A person has to go through a few stages before he or she can produce a final piece of writing. According to Hughey, Wormuth, Hartfiel & Jacobs (1983), there are three stages of writing: pre-writing, free-writing, and re-

writing. However, Zamel (1983) describes the process of writing as nonlinear, exploratory, and generative whereby writers discover and generate ideas as they attempt to approximate meaning. In this case, the process of writing involves sub-processes of planning, collecting data, drafting, revising, rewriting and editing. These sub-processes of writing are considered as dynamic, non-sequential and interactive processes not as sequential stages. Writers also need to incorporate these sub-processes with other dimensions of effective writing such as audience, purpose, and text structure.

Writing apprehension is a term that has been introduced by Daly & Miller (1975). Daly & Miller (1975, p.11) defined writing apprehension as "A subjective complex of attitudinal, emotional, and behavioral interaction which reinforces each other". Researchers have used many terms to refer to writing apprehension such as anxiety and blocking (Al-Ahmad, 2003; Gungle & Taylor, 1989; Rose, 1980, 1983). They consider writing apprehension as a complex term because of the complexity of writing. Writing tasks tend to increase students' anxiety levels because anxiety can lead students to be demotivated to write which may affect negatively their attitudes towards writing. Writing apprehension is a serious problem that can hinder the performance of both native and non-native learners (Al-Sobh & Al-Abed Al-Haq, 2012; Graves, 1984).

Researchers have found three levels of writing apprehension, ranging from high, moderate, and low level (Daly & Miller, 1975). A study done by Hanna (2010) discovered that writing apprehension may influence students at all levels even after

they have graduated from universities. Her research on apprehensive graduate students at Midwestern University found that they experienced a high level of writing apprehension and produced a paper which was of less quality than the low apprehensive writers. She also found that students with high level of writing apprehension like to avoid writing tasks whenever possible and procrastinate their work. Daly and Miller (1975) believe that writing apprehension is associated with the tendency of people to approach or avoid writing. In other words, highly apprehensive students avoid writing whenever possible.

A study done by Erkan and Saban (2011) on EFL context in Çukurova University (YADIM) Turkey discovered that many of the students left the classroom without even trying to write a few sentences when it came to the writing section of the examinations. This study found that the students were extremely apprehensive. According to Erkan and Saban (2011, p.11), "it is reasonable to speculate that success with writing in a foreign language may be related to attitudes towards writing, apprehension about writing, and self-efficacy in writing". Moreover, students with high level of writing apprehension react in a certain manner which is different from students with low level of writing apprehension. Phillips (1968, p.42) asserts that "highly apprehensive individuals will avoid communication situations or react in some anxious manner if forced into them because they foresee primarily negative consequences from such engagements.

**1.2 The Teaching of Writing in English in Jordan**

In Jordan, learners of English as a foreign language suffer from weakness in writing in spite of the efforts made by the Jordanian educationalists to overcome this weakness (Al-Sobh & Al-Abed Al-Haq, 2012). English teachers give their students' various writing tasks to improve their writing performance. In Jordan, English is taught as a foreign language at all levels of education including at the tertiary level. Students are required to pass the English examinations at all levels including at the university level. The main educational philosophy in Jordan is to adopt the curriculum and teaching methodologies which provide students with the basic skills for communicative purposes (MOE, 2008). The Ministry of Education in Jordan realized the importance of English language as an international language, so they decided that English should be taught at the first grade at the age of six, beginning year 2000 (MOE, 2008).

In the first stage, starting from the age of six until ten, students learn English language including writing skill, four times a week, a 45-minutes class each. Writing activities in the first grade starting from the age of six until ten, include tracing and copying, drawing and matching, completing sentences, answering questions and writing them, and comparing and contrasting two things. However, in the 4th grade at the age of ten through 10th grade at the age of fifteen, students have classes five times a week, a 45-minutes class each. However, in the 6th grade at the age of twelve through 9th grade at the age of fourteen, the syllabus focus on both guided writing and some simple free-writing activities like describing a person you know. At the secondary level from 6th grade through 9th grade, students are instructed to

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do guided and free-writing tasks such as completing a task with linking words, writing a paragraph, describing a famous place by answering questions, writing about a holiday, and writing a story using some pictures. At the eleventh and twelfth grades from 16 years old through 18 years old, students learn English three times a week with a 45-minutes class each. Writing at this stage is integrated with the other language skills. Much of the writing instruction at this level focuses on preparing students for the Tawjihi (school-leaving examination). Students take the school-leaving examination over two sessions, the Winter and Summer sessions. Throughout the first and the second semester and before the Tawjihi examination, students are trained to write tasks that are similar to those in the Tawjihi. In the examination itself, they have to do three writing tasks: editing sentences, guided writing, and short free writing topics (writing an essay of about 80 words long).

At the beginning of each academic year, students who are accepted into the universities in Jordan are required to sit for an online placement test. Students who fail the test have to take three language courses, and those who pass the test have to take two language courses at the University Language Center. These courses focus on reading comprehension, grammar, and vocabulary. At the end of each course, students are required to take three online examinations. However, listening and writing are not taught or tested due to the large class size and nature of online examinations. On the other hand, most universities in Jordan require those majoring in English to take nine-credit hours of EFL writing courses: Writing (202), Writing (206), and Writing (320). Students in Writing (202) course are taught to write a one-page paragraph with a clear topic sentence and further develop this topic sentence to

make narrative, and descriptive paragraphs (e.g. the process of making or doing something). In Writing (206) course, students are taught how to write 200-word essays with a variety of rhetorical patterns, including comparison/contrast, argumentative, classification, cause/effect with appropriate introductions, well-organized and developed body paragraphs, and appropriate conclusions. In Writing (320) course, students are taught how to write 400-500-word comparison/contrast or argumentative essays about the literary texts. Universities in Jordan use textbooks to teach writing such as Boardman and Frydenberg's book (2002) which is Writing to Communicate; Savage and Shafiei's book (2007) which is Effective Academic Writing 1 and 2; and Davis and Liss's book which is Effective Academic Writing 3. Classes meet three hours a week with approximately seventy students per class. Most of the instructors who taught writing courses at the English Department were non-native speakers of English, and they had an MA or a PhD in Linguistics degree. Most instructors used the activities and exercises in the books mentioned earlier, and they used different writing techniques to teach their students. To conclude, the students in Jordan are not exposed to writing tasks that are demanding.

## 1.3 Problem Statement

Writing is a serious problem for first and second language learners (Al Ahmad, 2003). It is more complex in second language contexts where learners write in language systems that may be completely different from their first language system. There are limited number of studies on writing apprehension among ESL/EFL learners. Some researchers state that most of the research on writing apprehension focused on native English learners (Al-Ahmad, 2003; Atay & Kurt 2007; Cheng,

2004; Cheng, Horwitz, & Schallert., 1999; Cornwell & McKay, 1999; Daud, Daud, & Kassim, 2005; Gungle & Taylor, 1989; Hassan, 2001; Jones, 1985; Masny & Foxall, 1992; Rankin-Brown, 2006; and Salem, 2007). Only few research have focused on writing apprehension among second and foreign language (ESL/EFL) learners (Al-Ahmad 2003;  Atay & Kurt, 2007; Hassan, 2001; Latif, 2007; Salem, 2007; and Singh & Rajalingam, 2003). According to Cheng et al. (1999), one possible reason for this neglect to investigate writing apprehension in ESL/EFL contexts could be due to the second or foreign language instruction that is oral proficiency in the target language is a more important skill to master than writing skill. However, most studies on writing apprehension in Second Language (L2) contexts have reported mixed and confusing results pertaining to writing apprehension (Cheng et al., 1999). In this regard, Hassan (2001, p.12) remarked that "there is a need to investigate writing apprehension in an Arabic speaking context".

According to Al- Ahmad (2003), "All the remarks of researchers in ESL/EFL field indicated that writing apprehension is a real problem facing ESL/EFL students' apprehension" (p.33). In addition, Singh and Rajalingam (2012) believe that writing apprehension is a critical problem which is being faced by the majority of ESL/EFL students. Many researchers have highlighted the problem of writing apprehension as "a crucial determinant of students' success in learning to write effectively in English" (Al-Sawalha & Chow, 2012, p. 6). Hassan (2001, p.12) claims that "writing apprehension is a problem in writing classes because it has consequences for students' learning experience and for the decisions they make about engaging in productive, fulfilling writing". In addition, Hassan, (2001, p.12) claims that "writing

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apprehension is also a problem for teachers who recognize apprehension in the behavior of students, but have no practical and reliable means of intervention". Due to the limited number of studies on writing apprehension among ESL/EFL students, more studies on ESL/EFL students are needed (Al-Ahmad 2003; Atay & Kurt, 2007; Hassan, 2001; Latif, 2007; Salem, 2007; and Singh & Rajalingam, 2003). The present study can give more insight on writing apprehenion in ESL/EFL context.

The number of Jordanian PhD students studying in Universiti Utara Malaysia is increasing. The number of Jordanian PhD students who graduated from UUM in 2011 was 44 students. In 2011, there are 77 Jordanian PhD students in UUM were still studying in the first semester 2010/2011 (Graduate Studies Unit in UUM, 2011). From the researcher's observation, these students faced great problem when writing their PhD thesis in English because of their educational background and less practice of writing in English. From the researcher's knowledge, students in Jordan lack the ability to write in English at school and university level because they did very little writing in English. Moreover, writing apprehension has been found to be a major problem facing Jordanian students at different stages of learning whether at school, university or postgraduate level (Al-Sawalha & Chow, 2012; Al-Sobh & Al-Abed Al-Haq, 2012; Huwari & Noor Hashima, 2011; and Muhaisen & Al-Abed Al-Haq, 2012). Research done on Jordanian students found that they faced high level of writing apprehension at different stages of learning whether at school, university, or postgraduate level. Therefore, there is a need to study on causes and effects of writing apprehension (WA) on Jordanian students (Al-Sawalha & Chow, 2012; Al-Sobh & Al-Abed Al-Haq, 2012; and Muhaisen & Al-Abed Al-Haq, 2012). Although

studies have been done on Jordanian students, these studies were done in Jordan. Therefore, there is a need to conduct a study on Jordanian students who are studying abroad and this study tries to fill in this gap. Moreover, very few studies have been done on Arab postgraduate students overseas compared with local students. This has made the researcher interested to highlight writing apprehension among Jordanian PhD students who are studying in UUM.

Writing apprehension is considered a serious problem for both graduate and undergraduate students. Researchers such as Onwuegbuzie & Collins (2001); and Wiltse (2006) believe that graduate students struggle because of writing apprehension. Many research have been conducted on undergraduate students at colleges or universities such as by Abu Shawish & Atea (2010); Davis, Fisher & Forde (2009); Gardner, Milne, Stringer and Whiting (2005); Latif (2007); and Takahashi (2009). However, a few research have been done on postgraduate students among ESL/EFL learners. Since there are limited number of studies on postgraduate students, Corbett-Whittier (2004); Dong (1998); and Gurel (2010) suggest for more studies on these students. The rationale for studying postgraduate students are:

> Postgraduate students are older, more matured and brighter than undergraduate students. Moreover, they got better grades than undergraduates, and usually work harder and spend more hours at jobs and studies than undergraduates. Their lives are generally more independent than those of undergraduates, and they are expected to display more intellectual ingenuity and independence of mind (Bloom, 1981, p.1).

Arabic ESL/EFL learners have difficulties in writing due to factors such as limited number of vocabulary, problems with idioms and cultural knowledge, less experience with L2 rhetorical strategies, and the apprehension of writing (Salem, 2007). Al Fadda (2012) explored the factors that make Arabic EFL/ESL writers feel apprehensive in writing such as anxiety over expression, writing style, motivation, and writer's block. A study done by Al-Sawalha and Chow (2013) investigated the causes of writing apprehension among Jordanian EFL students at Yarmouk University in Jordan. The participants were 24 third year students studying B.A English Language at Yarmouk University in Jordan for the academic year 2010/ 2011. Focus group interview was used by the researchers to collect the data. The results of this study showed that majority of the Jordanian EFL students at Yarmouk University in Jordan experienced high level of writing apprehension. The main reason behind the students' apprehension was related to their teacher's use of their mother tongue to teach English writing classes. The researchers concluded their study that using Arabic in the writing classroom did not improve the students' proficiency level which in turn had affected their apprehension level and hence their ability to write in English.

From the researcher's experience as a Master and a PhD student in UUM, he believes that the most difficult task when writing in English for the Jordanian PhD students is writing their thesis rather than writing other tasks such as article review, case studies, and essays during examinations. Jordanian postgraduate students have low confidence in writing because they are not sure if they can succeed in their studies due to their previous educational experiences and self-efficacy beliefs (Al-

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Sawalha & Chow, 2012). Studies have found that majority of the Jordanian postgraduate students' experience apprehension when writing in English language (Al-Sawalha & Chow, 2012). Students with high level of writing apprehension have been found to procrastinate their work until the date of submission. They always complain about the difficulties that they face throughout writing their thesis (Muhaisen & Al-Abed Al-Haq, 2012). Even in the classroom, they are belligerent and resentful about the assignments and grades. At the same time, they are nervous when writing an assignment and they are apprehensive about academic writing because they believe that they are unable to finish their work perfectly and saying that only the professor has the correct answer (Al-Sawalha & Chow, 2012). The above studies have found that Jordanian students at schools and universities experienced high level of writing apprehension. The studies on Jordanian postgraduate students mentioned were conducted in Jordan. However, this study hopes to fill-in the gap by discovering the causes of writing apprehension on Jordanian PhD students studying abroad when writing their PhD thesis. In addition, the causes and effects of writing apprehension need to be further investigated to enrich the understanding of this phenomenon (Hanna, 2010; Huwari & Noor Hashima, 2011; Salem, 2007).

More studies on the difficulties in writing a thesis in English are needed in relation to writing apprehension. Holmes and Moulton (2003) believe that the apprehension of writing will increase when writing is made compulsory for students. Bitchener and Basturkmen (2006) discovered that most postgraduate students who were required to write a thesis experienced difficulties in the writing. Writing a thesis is the most

difficult task for many graduate students not only because of the size of the document but also the high standard of the thesis (Dong, 1998). At the same time, apprehension of writing in English is one of the challenges for students to write their thesis (Dong, 1998). Limited number of studies have been done on writing apprehension on PhD students who are required to write a thesis. Gurel (2010) suggests the need for more studies to investigate the apprehension in writing thesis among ESL/EFL contexts. Therefore, there is a need to conduct a study on Jordanian PhD students who are required to write a PhD thesis.

Researchers believe that reducing writing apprehension is an important issue to study. Very vew studies have focsed on the strategies that students use to reduce their writing apprehenion (Clark, 2005; and Daud et al., 2005). Salem (2007) claims that reducing writing apprehension is not being explored by researchers. Consequently, Clark (2005); and Huwari and Noor Hashima (2011) suggest for more studies on strategies that students can use to reduce writing apprehension through students' perspectives.

Most researchers on writing apprehension have studied the phenomenon through teacher's perspective. The researcher finds that many studies have been conducted to help students overcome their writing apprehension from teacher's perspective and experience such as by Al Ahmad (2003); Daud et al. (2005); Salem (2007); Smith (1984); and Tighe (1987). However, Bitchener and Basturkmen (2006), and Lin and Ho (2009) state that only a few research focused on writing apprehension through student's perspective.

According to Wiltse (2006), since 1970s most of the studies on writing apprehension have been in the field of English major. Therefore, there is a need to study writing apprehension among other majors to explore writing apprehension. Most studies have been conducted on English majors such as by Abu Shawish and Atea (2010); Hanna (2010); Hassan (2001); Latif (2007); and Lin and Ho (2009). The present study has focused on students who are majoring in English language and also other majors such as Information Technology, Accounting, Management, and Human Resources in UUM.

Many studies on writing apprehension used survey instruments such as Writing Apprehension Test (WAT), and Second Language Writing Apprehension Test (SLWAT) to measure writing apprehension among native and non-native of English language. Corbett-Whittier (2004); Hanna (2010); and Latif (2007) have found that a small number of studies used qualitative research to study writing apprehension such as the one done by Rankin-Brown (2006). Therefore, there is a need to study writing apprehension using qualitative research to obtain in-depth information about writing apprehension phenomenon from  Jordanian PhD students in UUM.

## 1.4 Objectives of the Study

This study aims to explore the causes of Jordanian Ph.D. students' writing apprehension when writing their Ph.D. thesis in Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM). In addition, this study aims to explain the effects of writing apprehension from the Jordanian Ph.D. students when writing their Ph.D. thesis. Lastly, it intends to

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identify the strategies that the Jordanian Ph.D. students' employed to reduce writing apprehension when writing their Ph.D. thesis.

## 1.5 Research Questions

In order to understand the writing apprehension phenomenon, three aspects were focused: causes, effects, and strategies. The following research questions guided this study:

1. What are the causes of the Jordanian Ph.D. students' writing apprehension when writing their Ph.D. thesis?

2. What are the effects of the Jordanian Ph.D. students' writing apprehension when writing their Ph.D. thesis?

3. What are the strategies that the Jordanian Ph.D. students' employed to reduce writing apprehension when writing their Ph.D. thesis?

## 1.6 Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it is one of the very few studies to be conducted on Jordanian students who are studying overseas and doing postgraduate studies. Most of the literature written on writing apprehension come from the English speaking countries. Therefore, this study can contribute to the existing research on writing apprehension among postgraduate students especially Jordanians. This study can add to the literature on EFL context to help researchers understand writing apprehension phenomenon among EFL learners like Jordanian context. This study would also increase the knowledge on Arabic people because according to Nydell (2006, p. 68),

"Foreigners find very little materials available to help them to understand the Arab society."

Exploring the causes, effect and the strategies of writing apprehension among Jordanian PhD students would enhance our understanding of the writing apprehension among Arab students. It is also hoped that this study will help learners to become aware of the causes of writing apprehension. By exploring the causes of writing apprehension among Jordanian PhD students in UUM, supervisors can help their supervisees to reduce writing apprehension. In addition, the present research will contribute to the literature and growing research on writing apprehension from students' perspective. This study can also lend valuable insight into the strategies that students can use to reduce writing apprehension. It is hoped that this study will encourge students to be self-directed learners, by adopting, modifying, and applying some strategies that they can use to reduce writing apprehension. In addition, it is hoped that the strategies that the PhD students use to reduce writing apprehension can help supervisors guide their postgraduate students in reducing writing apprehension.

**1.7 Definition of Terms**

**<u>Writing</u>** refers to "a highly complex act that demands the analysis and synthesis of many levels of thinking" (Graves, 1984. p. 63).

**Writing apprehension** refers to "the tendency to experience high levels of anxiety when required to write, resulting in the individual's approach to avoid writing, which in turn affects the writer's behavior, attitudes and writing performance" (Daly, 1978; and Faigley et al., 1981).

**Affective theory** refers to "the psychological states of learners during communication across boundaries of geography, linguistics and cultures" (Berman, 2005, p. 13).

**Social-cognitive theory** refers to "the belief that all knowledge is constructed in a social context in a complex and recursive manner unique to each individual learner, and that the usefulness of constructed knowledge is determined by its effectiveness in that social context" (Bandura, 1986. p. 94).

**Native Speaker Language** refers to "the native speaker who acquires the L1 of which he/she is a native speaker in childhood" (Davies, 1991, p. ix).

**Second Language** refers to "the language which is not a native language in a country but which is widely used as a medium of communication (e.g. in education and in government) and which is usually used alongside another language or languages" (Richards, Platt, and Platt, 1992. p. 143).

**Foreign Language** refers to "a language that is not a native language in a country. A foreign language is usually studied either for communication with foreigners who speak the language, or for reading printed materials in the language" (Richards et al., 1992, p. 142).

## 1.8 Summary

This chapter serves as an introduction to this study, with three objectives. Firtsly, to explore the causes of writing apprehension among the Jordanian PhD students when writing their PhD thesis in English in Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM). Secondly, this study aims to explain the effects of writing apprehension from the Jordanian PhD students' perspectives. Lastly, it intends to identify the strategies that the students used to reduce writing apprehension. Moreover, it offers a brief review of the teaching of writing in English in Jordan. Following that, the chapter discusses the statement of the problem, the objectives, the research questions, and the significance, of the study. Significant terms that are used throughout the remainder of the study are defined next.

## 1.9 Organization of the Thesis

Chapter one is an introduction of this study with the objectives to explore the causes of writing apprehension, to explain the effects of writing apprehension and to identify the strategies that the students used to reduce writing apprehension. This chapter constitutes the background of the present study. The chapter also serves to give details about the statement of the problem, objectives, research questions, and

significance of the study. It also presents the definitions of significant terms that are used throughout the remainder of the thesis.

The second chapter presents literature review related to writing apprehension. Then it gives introducing the concept of writing and the process of writing. The chapter begins by offering a brief review of apprehension in general and the definition of writing apprehension, the concept of writing apprehension, the characteristics of high apprehensive writers, and writing apprehension among second/foreign language students. The chapter also explains the supervisors' perspective on writing thesis. It reviews the theories of writing apprehension. The second chapter also discusses the causes, effect of writing apprehension and the methods to reduce writing apprehension as well as the previous literature on writing apprehension.

A detailed description of the methodology behind this study is presented in Chapter Three. This includes research design, participants and procedures of selecting participants, data collection techniques, questions construction, interviewer identity, pilot study, trustworthiness of the study, data analysis, and ethical and legal considerations. The data for the study were collected by means of semi-structured interviews and document analysis.

Chapter four reports on the findings of this study on writing apprehension on Jordanian PhD students in UUM and discusses the central issues of the thesis. It focuses on the causes of writing apprehension, effects of writing apprehension and the strategies to reduce writing apprehension.

Finally, chapter five is a summary and implications of this study which involves supervisees and supervisors. The limitations of the study are explained in this chapter. Finally, it also discusses the recommendations for further research

# CHAPTER TWO
# LITERATURE REVIEW

## 2.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the following sub-headings: writing and the process of writing, apprehension, theories of writing apprehension, causes of writing apprehension, effects of writing apprehension, and methods to reduce writing apprehension.

Writing is considered to be the most complex and difficult skill to master and as a rule, is more complex and difficult than writing in one's native language (Bailey, 2003). Writing presents a great challenge for most students in academic context, both in the mother tongue and in an ESL\EFL context. Since English has become the most popular language universally, the importance of English writing cannot be denied (Chow, 2007). This difficulty of mastering writing, suggesded by Salem (2007) lies not only in generating and organizing of ideas but also in translating these ideas into readable texts.

According to Graves (1984), writing contributes to the development as well as the knowledge of the person. Graves (1984) state that "Writing is a highly complex act that demands the analysis and synthesis of many levels of thinking" (p. 63). Similarly, Hughey et al., (1983) claim that writing is a skill developed during the lifetime of the person and serves multi-purposes like communication, critical thinking, problem solving, self-actualization, and control of one's personal

environment. Other researchers consider writing features as being a highly complex problem-solving cognitive procedure (Rose, 1980; and Flower and Hayes, 1981). Zamel (1983) also describes writing as "a process of discovery and making meaning" (p.166). However, several researchers including Smith (1984) consider writing as a social activity with the purpose of sharing opinions and thoughts with other individuals. Generally speaking, students are a part of the thinking, talking and writing community. Similarly, Hughey et al., (1983) consider writing as a social-cultural and cognitive process. They assert that socialization is a complicated way of teaching students the way of writing in a novel language.

Arab learners of English which include Jordanians encounter major problems in writing. This problem has been discussed by many researchers such as Abbad (1988); Abdul Haq (1982); Huwari and Noor Hashima (2010); Rabab'ah (2003); and Wahba (1998). In addition, studies were conducted on Jordanian EFL contexts such as by Al-Khuwaileh and Shoumali (2000); Thompson (1980); Zughoul (1991) and Zughoul and Husain (1985).These studies have shown that EFL Jordanian students encounter several problems in the four language skills, particularly in writing. Similarly, previous studies have found that the problem the Jordanian EFL students faced could be associated with the included English language department curricula imposed on the EFL teachers in Jordan which focus on the traditional methods employed to teach writing instead of the process of writing.

Al-Sobh and Al-Abed Al-Haq (2012) observe through their experience in teaching English at schools and universities that Jordanian students are weak in the writing skill, and they need to enhance their writing performance. Jordanian students face difficulty in composing as they are required to produce good ideas arranged logically, using active vocabulary items and structures including discourse markers. This difficulty lies on how to produce meaningful sentences which comprise coherent text. Whiteman (1981) states that Jordanian students are weak in writing because teachers concentrate on teaching grammar, spelling drills, and punctuation more than involving students in the writing process.

## 2.2 Writing Process

Several researchers such as Burke (2010); Holmes and Moulton, (2003); Hughey et al. (1983); Rose (1980); and Zamel (1983) stress that writing process involves many developmental levels which are not set up in a linear fashion but they are characterized as recursive and cyclical. Similarly, Zamel (1983) stresses the process of writing as nonlinear, exploratory, and generative character; the core reasons why writers discover and create ideas as they try to provide the meaning. The writing process includes sub-processes consisting of planning, collecting data, drafting, revising, rewriting and editing. These sub-processes need to be visualized as dynamic, non-sequential and interactive. It is important for the writers to include these sub-processes along with other facets of effective writing such as audience, purpose, and text structure (Zamel, 1983). Along the same line, Hughey et al. (1983) claim that writing comprises recursive cycles rather than the traditional idea of prewriting, writing and rewriting.

Several researchers have delved into the notion of writing stages and among them are Emig (1977); Perl (1980); and Sommers (1980). Since writers have certain rules when they are going through the actual writing process of thinking out loud and talking about what they are creating, the above researchers believe composing to be a non-linear process but a recursive and cyclical one. In other words, when writers create writings they do not have a hard and fast rule of following a linear line of planning, writing, and revising; but what they do is to follow a recursive technique which progresses back and forth discovering, analyzing, and synthesizing ideas (Holmes & Moulton, 2003).

Writers often go back to reread, add, delete or modify the position of some sentences or paragraphs. On the other hand, Reid (1993) provides a description of the writing process as a process of two steps forward, one step back; a process of back and forth as writers write. Perl (1980) explains the writing process by stating that "in the process of writing, writers can discover and construct the intended meaning by matching the meaning of what one thinks to what one writes; reworking and refining the writing so that it more precisely convey what one wants to say" (p. 32).

On the other hand, Petric and Czárl (2003) categorizes the writing process into three: prewriting, writing and rewriting. These three stages of the writing process are interconnected and they are non-linear in that they may overlap and may occur repeatedly without any fixed sequence or order (Manchón & Roca de Larios, 2007). Petric and Czárl (2003) assert that writers normally pass through all of these stages, spending time on each stage depending on their work, personality, craftsmanship,

and the challenges that might arise during writing. Normally, researchers make use of different ways of observation and description of what writers go through at every stage of the writing process.

### 2.2.1 Pre-Writing

According to Petric and Czárl (2003), prewriting is the entire process that takes place prior the creation of the first draft. Often-times, writers take an enormous amount of time up to 85% at this stage. On the other hand, the importance of this stage is highlighted by Irsmascher (1979) who stressed on it being the main generative period of writing and is an imperative precondition of the process. At this stage of the writing process, the writers generally go through different sources of knowledge that would help in enhancing the writing process, such as feelings, background knowledge, intuitions, past experience, attitudes, and expectations for the purpose of generating ideas and arranging them in a proper order (Hughey et al., 1983). To stress the importance of the prewriting stage, Thompkins (1990) points that 70% of writing time should be spent in prewriting. Having in mind of the amount of time that should be spent on prewriting, one cannot agree more that this stage of the writing process cannot be taken lightly. Petric and Czárl (2003) state that the pre-writing stage involves planning to write. Usually teachers provide a lot of help at this stage to support the students in the generation of ideas. For instance, students are normally taught to utilize various prewriting methods like brainstorming, free-writing, and word clustering to express themselves and to self actualize writing (Coles, 1978; Elbow, 1973; and Macrorie, 1976).

Tribble (1996) proposes that prewriting starts with organizing the ideas and activate the schemata, which refers to the knowledge of the world that a person possesses that allow him to relate background experience to the topic and discover everything he intends to say. Generating ideas, which falls in the realm of the prewriting stage is a big hurdle for many L2 writers. This stage invokes complex cognitive skills. As students try to decide what they want to write about, they use long-term memory to retrieve information about the topic (Stapa & Abdul Majid, 2012). In L2 writing, the process of the idea generation and long-term memory are far more complex. This is because students are unlikely to consciously distinguish between long-term memory information on the topic and information on the language expression. In fact, the writer considers the linguistic information more important than the ideas on the topic. This clash of topic and grammar information in long-term memory may hamper the idea generation phase of the second language writing process (Stapa & Abdul Majid, 2012). Additionally, if the topic is not culturally related and somewhat unfamiliar to the writer, generating ideas will be even more difficult, since the writer will have less related information stored in the long-term memory (Scott, 1996).

According to Selfe (1984), writers who normally display a high level of apprehension plan less, although they undergo less prewriting time compared to more confident writers. One of the big challenges in prewriting stage is the moment where ideas are turned into words.  At the onset of writing, ideas and thoughts come to the writer slowly, but in some cases, the ideas may be thought of earlier even prior to the thought of writing. According to Hillocks (1985), this stage of writing may start as a specific stimulus in the writing process. Hillocks (1985) evidences this by

giving an instance of a girl possessing ideas and thoughts regarding an event in her life several months prior to the writing composition.

This is further evidenced by Calkins (1983) who states that "as children consider, select and reconsider their topics, they experience the revision process. This is often the first and easiest form of revision" (p. 4). After the exploration of ideas and thoughts, writers proceed to the production phase of the writing process which consists of 'composing'; a process whereby the writers organize ideas and thoughts and express them in writing.

## 2.2.2 Free-writing

This stage of writing is quite important for the process to be initiated (Al-Ahmad, 2003). Students are advised to write regularly regardless of the mistakes in sentence structure and choice of words. Elbow (1973) is one of the most famous researchers who follow this method. The author asserts that students often reveal the real meaning behind their intention through the translation of their ideas into words. Elbow's (1991) article explains on the meaning of free-writing by stating: "It can lead to a certain experience of writing or kind of writing process getting rolling, getting steaming along, a door opening, getting warmed up, juices flowing, or sailing" (p.60).

At this stage of writing, students begin to realize that writing is interlinked and they can put their personal sign on it. It is also notable that writing is impacted by the writer's past experience and a major amount of actual writing process time is spent

in the creation of ideas (Negari, 2011). Furthermore, Selfe (1984) asserts that students having high levels of writing apprehensions spend minimal time in the process of free-writing and they are not concerned with the complete structure. Petric and Czárl (2003) state that in the second stage, that is free-writing, the first draft has to be written by the students themselves who then will go on to revise and to produce the second draft.

During composition, writers normally reach a number of options and decisions. The decision process takes interludes during the process which are generally longer as compared to the writing itself. "These pauses are natural and they are essential delays to effective writing as the writer is waiting for information, insights, order, a need to write and voice" (Murray, 1985. p. 226). This phase of the process presents the writing process as being cyclical as well as recursive. Graves (1983) stresses on the re-cursiveness being a character of writing by stating, "all writers follow a simple pattern: select, compose, read, select, compose, read" (p. 226). The final stage of writing after this stage is called rewriting.

### 2.2.3 Re-writing

The last stage of writing is rewriting or as what researchers call revision. In the history of the writing process, there are two views of revision. "The old view conceived revision as a cleaning-up activity aimed at correcting surface or local errors in grammar, diction, punctuation, and spelling" (Flower & Hayes, 1981. p. 13). However, the current literature considers revision as a recursive process whereby the writers go back and forth while creating a text, searching for global

errors in the meaning and making corrections through particular ways like deletion, addition, substitution, and rearrangements (Flower & Hayes, 1981; Sommers, 1980).

According to Petric and Czárl (2003), rewriting is a rethinking of form and audience. It comprises researching, rethinking, redesigning, rewriting and finally editing each individual line, and the arduous task of making sure that each word is correct. This stage might take multiple hours that it took to draw up the first draft. It has been reported that it might take the writer the remaining fourteen percent of the writer's overall time. Petric and Czárl (2003) stated that in the post-writing stage, the students would focus on the grammatical aspects, idea organization, and vocabulary. After the final editing, they would then submit their final written task.

While observing both experienced and inexperienced writers, several researchers (Faigly and Witte, 1981; Negari, 2011) claim that inexperienced writers are inclined to revise their work locally and their revision tend not to improve the text. This is further supported by some other authors who said, "They frequently lose track of what they mean by becoming caught up in correcting details on grammatical or logical ground before they have clearly sensed and expressed in some form what they mean to say" (Perl & Egendrof, 1979. p. 127).

To sum up, researchers have tried to pursue an investigation into writing and the composition process utilizing different ways to look into the writers' minds as they are in the process of composing. The result of the research established similar conclusions in the nature of the writing process. The researchers have discovered

that writing can be described as a recursive, cyclical, nonlinear, and a decision making process whereby writers stumble into new ideas while looking for the meaning.

## 2.3 Apprehension

The present research stresses on a crucial issue which is communication apprehension. The literature regarding communication apprehension can be categorized into two main parts: writing apprehension and oral communication apprehension. This section discusses the definition of writing apprehension, the writing apprehension notion, and the characteristics of students possessing a high level of writing apprehension in the second/foreign language.

### 2.3.1 Communication Apprehension

Several researchers have proposed that communication apprehension comprises two elements: writing apprehension and oral communication apprehension (Davis et al., 2009; Waston, 2007). Some researchers think that foreign language apprehension is linked to communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation and examination anxiety (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986). Additionally, McCroskey (1977) states that communication apprehension is synonymous with communication anxiety which is generally defined as "an individual's level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons" (p. 82).

According to Book (1976), when people speak or write, they normally make use of particular patterns or regularities of language. Since nervous persons possess less confidence in their opinions and judgments, they are inclined to protect themselves by being introverted in situations when they have to communicate. Contrary to nervous persons, confident ones are inclined to initiate communication for the purpose of persuading or influencing other individuals. According to Book (1976), several studies regarding communication apprehension have found that this common phenomenon is a weakening handicap phenomenon. However, research that deal with the effect of apprehension on communication behavior and effectiveness are somehow lacking and are concentrated on speech. Through analogy and observation, it can be observed that particular speech communication behaviors are displayed by nervous individuals through speech as well as written communication.

Along these lines, Marshall and Varon (2009) conducted a study on 221 Accounting Information System (AIS) in the University of Southern United States. The study investigated the relationships of accounting seniors' writing apprehension (WA) to additional writing assignments in the accounting curriculum and to the business writing course. The results of the study: (1) There exists a significant and a positive relationship between writing apprehension and oral communication apprehension, (2) There is a significant relationship between writing apprehension and grades earned in the Business Writing course, (3) No significant difference was found between writing apprehension scores of the senior and sophomore Accounting majors. (4) Additional writing assignments devoid of writing instructions as a method impacting writing apprehension levels, hence, indirectly affecting writing

performance, for Accounting students with high writing apprehension were not supported. This study reveals that approximately 17 percent of Accounting seniors experienced high writing apprehension levels. Moreover, the results indicate that more writing assignments serve to validate the fears of the already high writing apprehensive Accounting students.

Watson (2007) suggests that communication apprehension is one of the elements that can influence an individual's decision to communicate. Communication apprehension theory states that high-apprehensive individuals are less inclined to communicate as compared to low-apprehensive individuals (McCroskey & Richmond, 1990; Scott & Timmerman, 2005). Research show that communication apprehension may arise due to prior conditioning. In sum, communication apprehension (CA) can be categorized into two major parts called Writing Apprehension (WA) and Oral Communication Apprehension (OCA). It plays a crucial role in affecting the individual's decision to either communicate effectively or not. In the following section, the researcher attempts to explain writing apprehension beginning with a discussion of its several definitions.

## 2.3.2  Definitions of Writing Apprehension

Different definitions of writing apprehension have been provided by scholars like Daly and Miller (1975); Faigley, et al., (1981); Rankin-Brown (2006); and Tighe (1987). On the other hand, Hettich (1994) states that writing apprehension has not been clearly defined. Researchers have used different terms to refer to writing apprehension such as anxiety and blocking. Sometimes, they tend to mix writing

apprehension with other terms (Hettich, 1994; Rose, 1980). Hettich (1994) ascribed the absence of clarity in the use of the apprehension terms to the lack of distinct parameters on what aspects of writing apprehension is fore grounded (e.g. the affective and cognitive process, the academic context, and the writer's personal views).

Daly and Miller (1975a) define writing apprehension as "a subjective complex of attitudinal, emotional, and behavioral interaction which reinforces each other" (p.11). In addition, this definition seems to combine the three types of experiences which Hettich (1994) referred to in his definition of writing apprehension. Hettich argues that writers who have one or more of the following symptoms are likely to have apprehension about writing.  One of these symptoms is having a subjective negative attitude toward a certain writing situation or writing in general. Another symptom is resisting writing, when a writer is unable to start writing or unable to continue. Finally, feeling anxiety during the writing process is another symptom. Faigley, et al. (1981) further define writing apprehension as "a construct associated with a person's tendencies to approach or avoid situations that require writing accompanied by some amount of evaluation" (p. 16). Faigley et al. (1981) explain writing apprehension as the tendency to experience high degrees of anxiety when asked to write, resulting in an approach-avoidance conflictive state which manifests itself in one's behaviors, attitudes, and written products. Similarly, Rankin-Brown (2006) defines it as negative, anxious feelings (about oneself as a writer, one's writing situation, or one's writing task) that disrupt some part of the writing process and Tighe (1987) defines it as the fear or anxiety about writing.

In addition, McLeod (1987) explains that writing apprehension is also experienced by intellectual writers who have the capabiley to perform the task at hand, but who experience difficulty in doing so. On the other hand, Elias (1999) stresses on the willingness to write or avoid writing while Daly (2001) emphasizes on the inclination of the students either to write or avoid writing.

In the present study, the researcher used the definition of writing apprehension which has been provided by Daly (1978) and Faigley et al. (1981). Daly (1978) and Faigley et al. (1981) define writing apprehension as " the tendency to experience high levels of anxiety when required to write, resulting in the individual's approach to avoid writing, which in turn affects the writer's behavior, attitudes and writing performance". The following section deals with a brief introduction about of writing apprehension among second/foreign past studies.

### 2.3.3 Writing Apprehension

Several researchers such as Al-Ahmad (2003) describe writing apprehension as a term that is highly complex. According to Al-Ahmad (2003), writing apprehension has been a critical problem for both native and non-native writers' language learning. Similarly, Daly, Vangelisti and Witte (1988) describe the term as a writing-specific anxiety. Al-Ahmad (2003) also associates ambiguity in the utilization of apprehension term to the absence of structured parameters on the elements of writing apprehension (e.g. the affective and cognitive process, the academic context, and the writer's personal views). In addition, Hettich (1994) believes that writing

apprehension is a problem because it has consequences for students' learning experience, and for the decisions they make about engaging in productive, fulfilling writing projects.

Writing apprehension is associated with many kinds of experiences. First, it refers to a behavior of resistance by an individual writer in a situation when he/she cannot begin to write or is being interrupted in the writing process owing largely to writing avoidance. Second, it is used to describe a writer who negatively judges a particular writing project's value or any writing project's value; in other words, the avoidance stems from the writer's negative attitude. It is also used to refer to a general anxiety and agitation during the writing process in cases whereby the writer is blocked or otherwise (Hettich, 1994). In addition, writers generally experience one or more elements of writing apprehension including negative attitudes, emotional agitation or blocking. In some cases, the writer manages to finish the project but in others he/she fails to. Writers suffer from writing apprehension owing to feelings of anxiety or negative attitudes towards writing but there is no clear cut solution for their problem (Hettich, 1994).

According to Daly et al. (1988), writing apprehension (WA) is considered as a construct, characterizes a person's willingness to enrol in writing classes. The level of writing apprehension in an individual may stem from intense anxiety. However, Madigan, Linton and Johnston (1996) suggest that writing apprehension may be attributable to a writer's negative self talk as opposed to his writing abilities.

Daud et al. (2005) state that anxiety or apprehension is a single factor that may impact the learning process while Smith (1984) states that its development may be traced back to an individual's early years of education. On the other hand, Takahashi (2009) explains that anxiety of L1 writing has been studied as early as the 1970s. Abu Shawish and Atea (2010) claim that L1 and L2 student writers both experience challenges when completing writing tasks as this is a common psychological phenomenon that has been accepted in literature under different terminologies like writing apprehension, writing block, writing anxiety and fear of writing; the most common of which is writing apprehension and writing anxiety. They believe that the writers generally experience discomfort and work painstakingly at their writing activity.

As mentioned above, researchers have used various terms to describe writing apprehension such as anxiety and blocking (Al-Ahmad 2003; Rose, 1980, 1983). According to Corbett-Whittier (2004, p. 83), writer's block can be defined as "an appropriate reaction when worry is temporary and leads to a solution". According to Corbett-Whittier (2004), writing anxiety or writers' block can be considered as a form of fear which appears in various ways and most of the time as anxiety or worry. Goleman (1995) adds to the description by stating that it is the type of worry that constitutes the core of anxiety, leading the individual to reflect on an issue and determine possible solutions to it and pitfalls. Similarly, Watson (2007) states that researcher's associate writing apprehension with two aspects namely academic setting and business communication. The author claims that researchers involved in the academic setting state that high apprehensive writers were less successful in

basic writing course, avoided advanced writing courses and perceived their writing as being less successful. In the business communication context, Faris, Golen and Lynch (1999) state that writing apprehensive individuals in the organizational setting tend to avoid jobs requiring writing tasks while Daly and Miller (1975b) claim that apprehension in education settings affects students' satisfaction in writing courses, expectations of success in writing classes, and enrollment patterns in advanced composition courses. Daly (1979) believes that teachers also distinguish students on the basis of levels of writing apprehension, indicating that highly apprehensive writers are much less likely to succeed in a variety of academic subjects than their low apprehensive counterparts.

Phinney (1991) states that researchers have generally used two approaches when discussing writing apprehension and the writer's blocks. The former approach correlates some measures of writing apprehension with a variety of factors, including writing performance and quality of product (Daly, 1977; Daly & Miller, 1975a), performance on standardized writing tests (Daly, 1978; Daly & Miller, 1975b), perceived intensity of the writing environment (Bennett & Rhodes, 1988), gender differences (Daly, 1979; Daly & Miller, 1975b), and willingness to write and expectations about writing (Daly & Miller, 1975b) while the latter approach focuses on the cognitive components of writer's block.

Several researchers have acknowledged the differences that exist between emotional feelings and writing block. According to Daly (1985), writer's block is a behavior stemming from a particular emotional response to a writing incident or an outward

behavior of the inner feelings. Cheng et al. (1999) add to this distinction by stating that writing apprehension generally is negatively related to the message quality such as individual's actual writing behavior, their writing performance, and their inclination to write or enrol in advanced writing courses. Similarly, Rose (1980, 1983) adds to the literature by stating that one behavior related to blocking is anxiety which often results in confusion, frustration or anger. Rose discovers that some blockers are able to write a few sentences while others might be able to write more. When this occurs, blockers students eventually learn to doubt their writing abilities and develop a dislike to composition. Book (1976) also claims that anxious and apprehensive writers often try to avoid writing in the classroom and this leads to the deterioration of their writing skills.

Three studies (Abu Shawish & Atea, 2010; Al-Sawalha & Chow, 2012; and Salem, 2007) on writing apprehension among Arab EFL students showed that they experienced high level of writing apprehension. The sampling of two (Abu Shawish & Atea, 2010; Al-Sawalha & Chow, 2012) studies consisted of both gender, but Salem's study involoved only male students. All the participants in these studies were undergraduate students majoring in English language. However, the present study consisted of postgraduate students majoring in various majors including English major. The present study is similar to Salem's (2007) study with regards to the sampling of the study, as this study is concerned with male students while the other studies focused on both two genders.

A study conducted by Abu Shawish and Atea (2010) which involved 265 undergraduate students at three universities: Al-Aqsa University, Al-Quds University, and Islamic university showed that gender had no significant role in writing apprehension for all factors (affective, cognitive, linguistics, teaching practice, students' behavior, and feedback) except feedback. As for students' academic levels, i.e. sophomore, junior or senior, they had no influence on writing apprehension nor did they influence the estimates of the remedies of writing apprehension except for linguistic factor where the difference was in favor of juniors. University wise, it was revealed that Islamic University of Gaza students were more apprehensive than those of Al-Quds Open University and Al-Aqsa University particularly in teaching practices. A statistically significant difference in favour of the same group of students was also found in their estimates of the writing apprehension remedies. In addition, high achievers in writing classes displayed high apprehensiveness as compared to low achievers and no difference was revealed between their estimates of the remedies of writing apprehension. It was also found that computer use in writing did not play a significant role in the students' estimates of the causes as well as the remedies of writing apprehension.

A study was done by Al-Sawalha and Chow (2012) on Jordanian students at Yarmouk University who were at the third year of English language and literature major. The results of this study showed that majority of the Jordanian EFL students at Yarmouk University experienced a high level of writing apprehension.

A study done by Salem (2007) explored the views of 50 male undergraduate students majoring in English concerning writing in English at the University of Al-Azhar. Most of the students felt overwhelmed when they were required to write on a certain topic. They did not know how to start, how to develop their ideas or how to conclude the essay. They also lacked the technical skills of writing acceptable for compositions in English. They often repeated their ideas, reported few if any valid points, made serious mistakes in grammar and punctuation, and included irrelevant information.

The sampling for the present study is the same as the previous study done by Huwari & Noor Hashima (2011) i.e. on Jordanian postgraduate students. Both studies focused on the same context i.e. UUM. A study done by Huwari & Noor Hashima (2011) investigated writing apprehension among one hundred and three Jordanian postgraduate students in Universiti Utara Malaysia. The instrument used in this study was Writing Apprehension Test (WAT) developed by Daly and Miller (1975) to measure writing apprehension. The results of this study showed that majority of the Jordanian postgraduate students experienced high level of writing apprehension. There was a significant relationship between age, socio-economic status and writing apprehension. The researcher also included open-ended question in the survey. Majority of the respondents said that they experienced apprehension in writing a thesis more than writing assignments, or writing journals. It is important for the supervisors of the Jordanian postgraduate students in UUM specifically to be aware of their students' problems in writing in English.

Bloom (1985) and Rankin-Brown (2006) conducted a study on writing apprehension among native speakers. However, the present study focuses on EFL context because very few studies have been done on writing apprehension. A study done by Rankin-Brown (2006) interviewed a group of advanced-level English language learners in the U.S.A. concerning writing apprehension. It was found that they experienced high levels of writing apprehension. She found that the participants believed that "writing in English was kind of wasting the time" (p.3). They were not interested in writing. They believed that they would be required to do little writing once they graduated from university. They also expressed a lack of interest in writing because their writing was not sophisticated enough for others to understand.

A study done by Bloom (1985) used qualitative research. It aimed to understand how personal, academic, and social constraints might influence the writer's level of apprehension. It involved case studies of two graduate students who were struggling to finish their thesis. Bloom (1985) conceptualized writing anxiety as "a label for one or a combination feelings, beliefs, or behaviors that interfere with a person's ability to start, work on, or finish a given writing task that he or she is intellectually capable of doing" (p. 121). She observed that the writer's internal (or trait) factors e.g., her knowledge of the subject matter, her creative tendencies, her level of energy, and her determination to write, not only shaped her composing processes but also her level of anxiety towards a writing task. Social and academic constraints found were impending deadlines, family and marital obligations, scheduling conflicts, and teaching responsibilities, frequently triggered writing apprehension.

On the other hand, these two studies (Sogunro, 1998; and Lynch & May, 1977) have shown that apprehension of writing can be considered as positive because it encourges the students to produce good papers. Sogunro (1998) found that apprehension is not necessarily a negative construct in all learning situations and for all individual students. Moderate level of anxiety can be beneficial to learning as it boosts motivation and promotes alertness and concentration. Many people experience normal levels of apprehension and are capable of overcoming their worries. Only one study supported Sogunro's findings which was conducted by Lynch and May (1977). They pointed out that high levels of writing apprehension enhance the writing performance of high creative writers, but not the low creative ones. Sometimes, it seems that certain levels of apprehension are advantageous for some student writers because they motivate rather than inhibit the students' performance.

In summary, researchers consider writing apprehension to be a complex term and a critical problem which may be faced by both native and non-native English learners. It will eventually impact the student's learning process. Researchers have also considered writing apprehension as synonymous with writing anxiety or blocks while others have categorized it into two main levels called high apprehensive writers and low apprehensive writers.

### 2.3.4 The Characteristics of High Apprehensive Writers

Writing apprehension can be categorized into two types: high writing apprehension and low writing apprehension. Students displaying the former generally suffer from

anxieties during English writing particularly non-native students. High level apprehensive students can be characterized as:

1. Write less (Smith, 1984; and Tighe, 1987).

2. Avoid writing classes (Book, 1976; Daly and Miller, 1975; Raimes, 1985; Reeves, 1997; Salem, 2007; Smith, 1984; Tighe, 1987; Waston, 2007).

3. Use less intense language (Daly & Miller, 1975).

4. Face difficulties in choosing topics to write about, write fewer statements, words in general and short essays, develop their ideas incompletely, lack knowledge of usage and grammar such as: using fewer –ly words, comma, and less punctuation compared with low apprehensive writers (Book, 1976; Daly, 1977; Faigley et al., 1981; Hays, 1981; Reeves, 1997; Rose, 1980, 1983).

5. Create longer t-units when writing a letter for an audience such as independent clauses, including modifiers (Richardon, 1981).

6. Like to procrastinate in their works (Bloom, 1981; Faigley et al., 1981; Reeves, 1997; and Salem, 2007).

7. May behave destructively (Bloom, 1981).

8. Less confident and less successful (Daly, 1979; Daly and Miller, 1975; Rose, 1980, 1983; and Waston, 2007).

9. Have lower self esteem (Reeves, 1997; and Salem, 2007).

10. Like to choose courses and careers that they believe involve little writing (Reeves, 1997).

11. Have a few writing role models at home, in school, and in the society at large (Reeves, 1997).

12. They write very little out of class (Raimes, 1985; and Reeves, 1997).

13. They score lower on tests of verbal ability (SAT), reading comprehension, and standardized tests of writing ability used for college placement (Daly, 1978; and Reeves, 1997).

14. Lack the writing motivation (Reeves, 1997).

Highly apprehensive writers display certain behaviors such as being afraid of writing evaluation because they expect a negative evaluation. They also try avoiding writing as much as possible in order to protect their self-esteem. They display higher levels of anxiety when they are asked to write while applying for a job (Daly & Miller, 1975c). Writing apprehension is said to impact students' expectations of successful writing and their inclination to study future writing courses. According to Wachholz and Etheridge (1996), individuals displaying high writing apprehension often depend on teachers for affirmation and consider writing as an inborn aptitude as opposed to a practiced process. Hanna (2010) points out that writing apprehension may affect students to write papers or research proposal effectively. Hanna found that graduate students who had high level of writing apprehension produced papers, and even proposals, that were underdeveloped, shorter than average, unclear, and more

affected by grammar and punctuation errors than proposals written by students who had low level of writing apprehension. Rose (1980, 1983) states that writing anxiety often lead to discomfort, frustration, and confusion on the part of students and eventually students end up writing a few sentences while others succeed in writing more but after a number of repetitions and through fits and starts. This consequently leads to the students distrust in his/her writing abilities and turn him/her into anxious writers. According to Salem (2007), highly apprehensive writers consider editing as an unrewarding experience.

Daly (1981) states that writing apprehension can be displayed by the way people approach or avoid writing. Additionally, Al-Ahmad (2003) claims that both L1 and L2 students' behaviors differ based on their degree of apprehensiveness. Those on the high category of apprehensiveness consider writing as useless and sometimes even punitive which leads to their avoidance of writing or situations requiring writing whenever they can. In the instances when they have to write, they feel higher levels of anxiety (Daly & Miller, 1975b) which is often reflected in their behaviors as they write and their attitudes as they express themselves about writing and their writing outcome. In contrast, low apprehensive writers generally do not avoid situations that require writing and display confidence in their writing abilities and often enjoy writing activities.

Studies by (Cornwell, 1998); Daly & Witte, 1978; and Reeves, 1997) have shown some similarities in relation to the characteristics of high apprehensive writers. They mentioned that students with high level of writing apprehension might produce

papers which are less quality than others; they like to delay their submission and avoiding writing classes whenever possible. For example, Reeves (1997) provided a summary of the attitudes of writing apprehensive students which included: (1) Students who are apprehensive about writing lack self confidence, (2) They face lower success in prior writing experience at schools, (3) They received negative feedback and lower responses from the teachers, (4) They are mostly apprehensive when asked to write narrative stories wherein they are required to express their personal feelings, beliefs and experience, but they feel less apprehensive while writing argumentative essays in which they are told not to inject their personal feelings and not to use the first person's point of view. Reeves's study is important as it provides some characterics that students face when they write in English.

In another study dealing with the characteristics of high apprehensive writers, Cornwell (1998) investgated the characteristics of high apprehensive writers on 29 first year students from an intact academic writing class at Osaka Jogakuin Junior College, Japan revealed that students experiencing high levels of anxiety performed poorer as compared to those who displayed low writing anxiety. However, group makeup did not make a difference on writing apprehension or final scores and no significant differences arose in the post scores. In other words, both the control group and the low group's post scores changed together; this scenario is similar to high apprehensive groups as well.

Regarding writing apprehension behavior, Boice (1985) identifies seven types of blocking behavior in his study regarding blocked academic writers: working apprehension or perceived difficulty in writing, procrastination, dysphasia, which include several categories of fear or anxiety, impatience with the progress of the writing, perfectionism, evaluation anxiety, and maladaptive rules. Along similar line, Rose (1983) identifies five categories of blocking behavior in his student writers: lateness, premature editing, complexity of material, attitudes towards one's writing, and pure blocking or inability to write. In addition, Rose also explored the impact of inappropriately applied rules on blocking.

A study conducted by Daly and Witte (1978) involving 110 undergraduate students in their freshmen year (1st semester) in the beginning composition course at Southwest University revealed that high apprehensive writers performed distinctly from their low apprehensive counterparts judging from the standardized tests of writing related skills competency. Another notable outcome is that high apprehensive writers displayed differences indicating the measurement of syntactic development in judgments of the writing quality of narrative/descriptive essays, as opposed to argumentative essays.

A similar study in the Japanese context was carried out by Takahashi (2009) involving 139 Japanese students studying in an English course at a Private University in Niigata showed that students suffering from high levels of writing apprehension possess less motivation towards learning the language. In other words, a negative relationship was established between writing-specific anxiety and self

perceived English ability. Similarly, a negative relationship was established between writing apprehension and proficiency/class performance. This study is significant because it provides important characteristics of high apprehensive writers through student's perspectives.

A similar result was reported by Raimes (1985) in his study of writing apprehension among L2. The results showed that high apprehensive writers had low willingness to write. The author mentioned some of the reactive mechanisms on the L2 writers: "Student writers chew their pencils, they shuffle their feet, they sigh, groan and stretch, and they ask how much they have to write" (p. 84). The author also stated that "when high apprehensive writers were requested to produce work, they often made many errors in grammar: They produced dry, flat, mechanical prose, full of repeated concepts, errors and unsupported generalization" (Raimes, 1985, p. 84).

In addition, Daly and Miller (1975b) discovered that high apprehensive writers had fewer expectations to be successful and were less inclined to enrol in future advanced writing course as compared to their counterparts. The findings showed that high apprehensive writers achieved lower scores as compared to low apprehensive writers in their writing tests. This result is further evidence by Faigley et al. (1981) who revealed that low apprehensive writers generally outperformed high apprehensive ones in writing competency tests (judged according to the extent that a student recognizes the errors in writing samples) and written performance of narrative/descriptive essays as opposed to argumentative ones. It is obvious that the results of Daly and Miller's study (1975a) are similar to Faigley et al.'s (1981) study

as they showed that high apprehensive writers wrote less successfully as compared to counterparts.

The study by Faigley et al. (1981) regarding students' level of writing apprehension was conducted on 110 undergraduate students at a beginning composition course. The results showed that: (1) High apprehensive writers scored lower on tests of writing related skills, (2) Scores on the objective tests of writing ability revealed that high apprehensive writers had less command over matters of usage and writing conventions than low apprehensive ones, (3) Apprehension had a significant effect on writing performance, (4) Highly anxious writers produced essays significantly shorter and less syntactically "mature" or "fluent" than their low-apprehensive counterparts, (5) High apprehensive writers were unable to develop their ideas as well as low apprehensive ones, (6) High apprehensive writers put less information into each communicative unit, whether at the T-unit or clausal level (7) High apprehensive writers used a more restricted repertoire of syntactic construction, (8) Non restrictive modifiers were also found, (9) The characteristics of skilled adult writing appeared less frequently in the prose of high apprehensive writers.

In conclusion, this section summarized the characteristics of students experiencing a high level of writing apprehension when writing in English. The evidences show that majority of researchers reached a consensus on the few characteristics of these students: students with high level of writing apprehension often avoided writing classes when they could, they did not often practice writing outside the classroom,

they experienced difficulties in choosing topics to write about and they always came up with short essays.

## 2.3.5 Writing Apprehension among Second/Foreign Language Students

The topic of writing apprehension has been dealt with by several researchers around the world but majority of them focused on native speakers of English language and only a few explored writing apprehension in ESL/EFL learners (Al-Ahmad, 2003; Cornwell & McKay, 1999; Gungle & Taylor, 1989; Salem, 2007; Stapa, 1994, 1998). This is regarded as a critical issue in the context of EFL learners as they face several challenges in learning how to write effectively in second/foreign language compared to native speakers (Al Ahmad, 2003).

Researchers who stress on writing apprehension are such as Salvoey and Haar (1990) who investigated writing apprehension on L1 and L2 student writers. Salvoey and Haar (1990) state that little research has been carried out that are dedicated to this issue. They said, "It is striking that writing apprehension, as compared to other performance anxieties like test apprehension or the fear of public speaking, has had little research attention paid to it, and yet it is quite prevalent and dominates so many aspects of the sufferer's life" ( p. 524).

Similarly, Al-Ahmad (2003) supports the notion that writing apprehension appears as a tremendous challenge to both native and non-native English student writers along with their writing teachers and claims that this generally negatively affects their writing performance. The author affirms that literature regarding L1 and L2

explore the composition processes of ESL/EFL students and show similarities between them (Jones, 1985; Raimes, 1985; Silva, 1993; Zamel, 1982, 1983). His study also revealed that both L1 and L2 writers had commonalities in their writing concerns (Raimes, 1985). Only a few studies in past literature were found to have concentrated on writing apprehension particularly on L1 and L2 learners. Among them, Daly and Miller (1975a) were the pioneers who explored writing apprehension, and their study was considered as the first ones to have explored the effects of writing apprehension in student writers. The very first study dealing with writing apprehension was publicized in 1975.

Gurel (2010) claims that most of the research on the thesis writing level of advanced academic writing focused on the structural analysis of thesis sections, across disciplines, tracing the course of thesis writing, and thesis supervision. So, there is a need for more studies to explore the apprehension of writing thesis among ESL/EFL contexts.

Research have been investigated the factors that may lead to the increase of writing apprehension among ESL/EFL writers. One of these studies was conducted by Gungle and Taylor (1989) which investigated some important relationships among variables of writing apprehension. Firstly, the study revealed a significant negative relationship between ESL writing apprehension and focus on content and ideas. Secondly, the results also revealed a positive significant relationship between focus on content and ideas and the inclination to register in a writing course. Furthermore,

highly apprehensive students displayed a disinclination to register themselves in advanced writing classes.

Along the same line, Zamel (1982) states that over stress on form often results in the disturbance of the writer's discovery process which eventually leads to a heightened writing apprehension. In a similar study, Taylor, Johnson and Gungle (1987) revealed a significant negative relationship between L2 learners' writing apprehension and their inclination to register themselves into an advanced writing course. Similarly, a study conducted by Taylor et al. (1987) investigated the relationship between ESL/EFL writing apprehension and highlighted form and content as well as the students' desire to enrol in advanced writing courses. The study showed a significant relationship between ESL writing apprehension and the desire to enrol in an advance course. This result evidenced in a study conducted by Daly and Shamo's (1978) which revealed no significant relationship between writing apprehension and focus on form rather than content.

Another similar study was conducted by Masny and Foxall (1992) who found that L2 students characterized as being high achieving writers rated low apprehension scores and they displayed a concern with form as compared to low achieving writers. In addition, Zamel (1983) conducted an interview with six students where one of them turned out to be an anxious writer and he attributed his anxiousness to grammar concerns and form concerns rather than content.

Jones (1985) conducted a similar study as Zamel's (1983) study. Jones made a comparison between two ESL writers who had divergent instructional backgrounds. The author found that one student (a monitor over-user), a recipient of grammar translation instruction displayed more concern about form which led to his writing apprehension. The other student (a monitor under-user), a recipient of a more communicative oriented instruction spent her time more effectively and efficiently in producing a more meaningful piece of writing.

A similar study conducted by Taylor et al. (1987) involved interviewing of four ESL high apprehensive students. Three of the four students stated that their teachers stress more on local errors as opposed to the development of ideas and thoughts. Therefore, it can be said that the stress on peripherals of language writing such as grammar, punctuation and different types of writing are the most common causes of ESL/EFL students' increased in writing apprehension.

According to Salem (2007), prior literature places the cause of L2 writing apprehension to the feedback that the learners garner from their instructors which works to create their experiences about writing. In instances where teachers concentrate more on the correctness of writing as opposed to the encouragement of students in generating ideas and thoughts, students face writing block. Raimes (1985) states that "we have trapped our students within the sentence. They worry about accuracy; they stop after each sentence and go back and check it for inflections, word order, spelling, and punctuation, and go on to attack the looming giant of the next sentence" (p. 83). The author believes that teachers emphasize on

the composition process believing that "when we do so, much of the necessary work on grammar, sentence structure, and rhetoric begins to take care of itself" (Raimes, 1985, p.91). In addition, results reported by Hassan (2001) revealed writing apprehension to be negatively related to the writing quality and quantity of the Egyptian EFL college students. The author further revealed that existence of a negative relationship between writing apprehension and self-esteem; in other words, low apprehensive writers displayed higher self-esteem while high apprehensive ones displayed a lower self esteem.

Another similar study was conducted by Abdul Fattah (1995) involving 151 students at Yarmouk University majoring in English in Jordan. The outcome of this study revealed that instructors needed to improve their methods of teaching and evaluation to lower student's writing apprehension and enhance the conditions conducive to FL learning. Along the same line, another notable study was carried out by Masny and Foxall (1992) involving two groups of adult subjects of an ESL intermediate class. The results revealed that the target subjects were more worried about the form rather than the content of their writings and high achieving writers were not as concerned about form as compared to low achieving writers. Apprehension was related to the subject's inclination to enrol in an advanced writing course and although the subjects displayed concern about form, they saw writing as a necessary activity.

According to Shaughnessy (1976), non-native English student writers generally suffer from writing apprehension during writing activities on the subjects as "basic writing students". The author further states that: "The student is already conditioned

to the idea that there is something wrong with his English, and that writing is a device for magnifying and exposing this deficiency, risks as little as possible on the page, often straining with what he does write to approximate the academic style, and producing in the process of what might better be called writing anguish" (p. 235).

There are two categories of research concerning the investigation of the impact of writing apprehension on L1 and L2 writers: (A) The first category involves the examination of the relationship between writing apprehension and different factors like performance and competence, occupational and academic decisions, performance on standardized writing tests, and gender differences. An instance of this category is best reflected in a study conducted by Daly and Miller (1975c) who explored the impact of writing apprehension on message encoding strategies, which revealed that students who were highly apprehensive used less complicated language than low apprehensive ones but despite that fact, they were more likely to suffer from cognitive stress in an active encoding situation as compared to their counterparts. Similarly, Daly's (1978) study revealed that writers suffering from high apprehension scored less on a comprehensive test of knowledge of writing skills as compared to students displaying low apprehensiveness, (B) the second category of research comprises of those concentrating on the elements of writing apprehension: for instance, why particular individuals experience writing apprehension in the beginning of their composition . Interviews conducted with teachers and students expound on the plausible causes of this happening.

In sum, Salem's (2007) study revealed a significant negative relationship between writing apprehension and L2 students' inclination to enrol in advanced writing classes. Along similar lines, a significant negative relationship was also found between writing apprehension and L2 learners' "concern with content and ideas" during the writing process. Unexpectedly, no significant relationship was detected between writing apprehension and L2 learners' focus on grammar while writing. As mentioned earlier in several sections, only a few researches focused on writing apprehension among ESL/EFL contexts and these include Gungle and Taylor (1989); Hassan (2001); and Taylor et al. (1987). Surprisingly, the results garnered in the L1 studies are similar to those in the L2 ones which is the existence of a significant negative relationship between writing apprehension and students' inclination to take up an advanced writing course (Gungle & Taylor, 1989; Taylor et al., 1987). Moreover, Gungle and Taylor (1989) found a significant negative link between writing apprehension and perceived writing requirements of the students' majors and a significant negative relationship between writing apprehension and focus on content and ideas during writing.

Furthermore, a negative relationship between writing apprehension and written performance who also found which means that the more apprehensive the writer is characterized to be, the less successful he is going to be in his written performance. Despite of the evidence revealing that writing apprehension is a negative influence on the student's written performance, his attitudes towards writing, his job selection, and communication, this very fact has not received sufficient attention in L1 research. This lack of attention is attributable to the fact that studies generally

concentrate on cognitive variables rather than on affective ones. Several studies conducted on this topic were mostly dated in the late 1970s or early 1980s. A study in the millennium by Hassan (2001) revealed writing apprehension's negative influence on writing quality and quantity of L2 writers. Additionally, a negative relationship was also established between writing apprehension and L2 written performance as well as students' self-esteem.

It can be concluded that research focusing on L2 writing apprehension are few compared to those multitude of studies on L1 writing apprehension. Nevertheless, L2 studies are more recent as compared to L1 ones because that the investigation of some variables in L2 contexts is generally delayed until it has been established as significant in L1 studies. In other words, L2 researchers have to depend on L1 research outcomes for sufficient evidence until L2 studies can be researched independently.


### 2.3.6 Supervisors' Perspective on Writing Thesis

In the last two decades, studies by Casanave and Hubbard (1992) looked into supervisor's perceptions of the postgraduate student's (L2) difficulties during thesis writing. Supervising postgraduate students poses some challenges to both students and supervisors alike all over the world (Andrade, 2006; Harman, 2003; Holbrook & Johnson, 1999; Ryan & Zuber-Skerritt, 1999).


A related survey conducted by Casanave and Hubbard (1992) involved 85 supervisors from 28 departments at Stanford University, located in Palo Alto, California. The study revealed that L2 doctoral thesis students encounter more

problems compared to native speakers and these problems were clearer at the sentence level including grammatical accuracy and appropriateness, vocabulary appropriateness, apprehension, spelling and punctuation accuracy more than at the paragraph level. In addition, Cooley and Lewkowicz's (1995, 1997) study involving 105 supervisors from nine faculties in Hong Kong University revealed that while supervisors found difficulties with surface forms and structures; it took second place to difficulties impacting the development of clear ideas and arguments. The researchers also identified difficulties concerning lexical choice, particularly with levels of appropriateness and formality and their potential to hide the real meaning of the statements. Moreover, 26% of the l2 students believed that they had serious difficulties in using English particularly in organizing ideas and arguments, utilizing the suitable writing style and expressing themselves in English along with writing apprehension.

In another related study, Dong (1998) examined two tertiary institutions in the U.S. and found that L2 postgraduate students face challenges in sequencing and development of propositions and with the proper use of transitions between propositions and topics. The L2 students believed that vocabulary choice was really important to express ideas and arguments. Almost a third of them were convinced that they had difficulties with vocabulary choice as opposed to a mere 10% native speaking students. It is notable that 49% of the ESL students had difficulty in grammar and mechanics compared to 72% of the native speakers. Challenges faced in sequencing propositions, making transitions and meeting the overall unity were also stated in the study but statistics were not recorded.

In the context of thesis writing, Bitchener and Basturkmen (2006) investigated the difficulties of postgraduate research students in writing their thesis in English as a second language. The study made use of in-depth interviews with pairs of supervisor and student in a comparative method, concentrating on the difficulties faced by the students in writing and discussing the results of their thesis. They revealed differences between the students' and the supervisors' accounts of writing difficulties. The students were inclined to view the difficulties based on limited English proficiency while supervisors viewed them as lack of understanding of the rhetorical and structural requirements of a thesis. The findings of this study are invaluable as it clarifies the importance of guidance and modelling to make students understand the requirements of writing various parts of the thesis. This requires further investigation into the underlying reasons for the difficulties of international students in thesis writing of which extant literature has shed only some light on. The study succeeded in identifying issues and challenges faced by international students during their thesis writing process. According to the authors, while it is crucial for international students to comprehend their supervisors' expectations and the standards of academy in Australian universities, it is also important for supervisors to keep the international students' distinct pedagogical requirements into consideration and to develop intercultural sensitivity to their pedagogical practice during their supervision. This consideration is important to improve the international students' educational experiences in the context of Australian universities.

In another study, James (1984) observed the impact of difficulties on a more comprehensive communicative success. The study revolved around Brazilian PhD

students studying at the University of Manchester where the author categorized the impacts based on breakdown of meaning, a blurring of meaning and distraction of meaning. James (1984) considered sentence level difficulties as distractions of meaning for the reader while inefficient ordering of propositions, inappropriate weighing of propositions and functional incoherence were considered to blur intended meaning, although he noted that some difficulties at the sentence level also led to the breakdown of meaning. These are characterized as long, complex sentences, faulty referencing, lexical difficulties associated with specialized vocabulary, and signposting weaknesses.

Furthermore, most supervisors find their postgraduate students having difficulty when writing their thesis. Several studies (Cooley & Lewkowicz, 1995, 1997; Dong, 1998; Jenkins, Jordan & Weiland, 1993; Parry, 1998; Thompson, 1999) concentrated on structuring an argument over a prolonged stretch of discourse with both consistency and balance. The researchers noted that the students found it difficult to understand the content that is suitable for individual chapters and sections of a chapter and they were uncertain as to how they should be organised. While Jenkins, et al. (1993) associated these difficulties to a certain extent, to lack of clear and logical thinking, Paltridge (2002); and Swales (2004) believe that difficulties were due to limited knowledge of the genre characteristics and the expectations of their supervisors.

The positioning of arguments relating to wider literature is also one of the main difficulties that supervisors have cited. For instance, supervisors reported that their students overstate or understate the implications of their findings according to the published literature. In addition, some supervisors reported that, to some extent, this problem was related to the failure to use the suitable modal verbs when making claims regarding the research findings (Cooley & Lewkowicz, 1995, 1997; Parry, 1998; Thompson, 1999). On the other hand, other supervisors thought that the positioning problems occur when students had a distinct conceptualization of the new academic community compared to theirs or the students were unclear of their audience and their expectations (Belcher, 1994; Hirvela & Belcher, 2001; Fox, 1994; Shen, 1989).

Belcher's (1994) case study revolved around three L2 students from varying disciplines – Chinese Literature, Applied Mathematics and Human Nutrition. He noticed the discrepancy in the supervisor's and student's understanding of writing goals and audience expectations. The supervisors claimed that these mismatches in understanding occur more in less successful students as opposed to their successful counterparts.

In some studies, Lillis (2001) and Prior (1994) attempted to assist students in understanding the academic community's expectations by stressing on the importance of the on-going communication between the supervisor and the student. Other studies (Cadman, 1997; Dong, 1998; O'Connell & Jin, 2001; Smith, 1999) confined their investigation to Chinese students and revealed that the postgraduate

students faced difficulties in developing arguments and counter-arguments through the use of evidence to support arguments, and the critical evaluation of theories models and methodologies. They attributed these difficulties to the Chinese students' propensity to respect and not question their academic superiors' ideas and opinions. The researchers cited many reasons why students failed to develop explicit knowledge of the functions, content and organization of the thesis. Some researchers (Lillis, 2001; Parry, 1998; Prior, 1994) associated the failure to the supervisors tacit as opposed to explicit knowledge of the features of the thesis in their disciplines and hence, this may be a barrier to their clear articulation of thesis requirements to their students.

On the other hand, some researchers argued that students might be successful in completing their research method course prior to initiating their thesis writing and they might have had the opportunity to apply the knowledge gained from the course in short research projects but this does not mean that they will be successful in applying the same knowledge to their thesis writing (Allison, Cooley, Lewkowicz & Nunan, 1998; Silva, Reichelt & Lax-Farr, 1994).

Some other researchers also claimed that students might have had the chance to refer to research articles related to their field of study prior to thesis writing but they might not have kept in mind certain features of articles or differences that might occur within and across disciplines and types of journals. In addition, a few of them might have had the chance to read the studies identifying varying features of different sections of articles such as those introductions written by Samaraj (2002); and

Swales (1981, 1990) or result sections written by Brett (1994); and Williams (1999). Students might have also had a chance to go through published guides and handbooks on thesis writing but this advice is who confined to and did not really delve into particular thesis sections (Basturkmen & Bitchener, 2005; Paltridge, 2002).

In sum, from the above review of literature, it is evident that postgraduate L2 students face many difficulties at sentence and paragraph levels, and in understanding and meeting the needs of the thesis genre. Due to the varying sections of the thesis, students may face difficulties in writing some sections compared to others. In addition, while literature has cited varying supervisor and student perceptions of the difficulty types that L2 students face during thesis writing, studies have failed to focus on specific difficulties experienced by the students and finally, the literature only reports the perceptions of supervisors and students regarding these difficulties but in separate groups – in other words, studies have failed to consider the level of shared understanding of the difficulties in pairs of supervisors and students.

## 2.4 Theoretical Framework

This section presents the two critical theories which guided this study: Affective Theory and Social-Cognitive Theory.

### 2.4.1 Affective theory

Researchers' interest of writers' affect was initiated in the mid-1970s and has been considered as one of the most dominant elements of writing apprehension. It has been considered as one of the reasons for writing difficulties and for these reasons; it cannot be overlooked by writers in writing discussions (Latif, 2007). Accordingly, Daly and Miller (1975) came up with an instrument for the measurement of writing apprehension which is Writing Apprehension Test (WAT). The WAT consists of 26 questions. The WAT (26 items) is a Likert-type self-report scale with five possible answers for each item from (1) strongly agree to (5) strongly disagree. Examples of the items are like: "I am not good at writing", "I look forward to writing down my ideas", "Expressing ideas through writing seems to be a waste of time", "Discussing my writing with others is an enjoyable experience", and "I don't like my compositions to be evaluated".

Berman (2005, p. 13) provides the definition of the affective states as "the psychological states of learners during the communication across boundaries of geography, linguistics and cultures". The affective stages are presented to include communicative anxiety, language anxiety, and L2 learning motivation. Berman (2005) asserts that the development of L2 learners' affective states encompasses different personality factors and feelings about themselves, and others who they communicate with; the communication context and particular values these individuals place on communicative act of interpersonal exchanges.

According to Daly (1985), writers' affect involves two other elements: writers' perceptions and beliefs and writers personal knowledge. He categorizes writer's perceptions and beliefs into two main types: the first category consists of the dispositional perceptions and beliefs endured in a constant way through time and across situations; these include beliefs about the writing process and about one's writing, affective dispositions and attitudes towards writing. While the second category consists of the 'situational perceptions and feelings' which are generally temporary and as opposed to consistent and are closely linked to a specific situation or task like perceptions of the writing contexts and responses of the individual towards writing situations. Moreover, the researcher of the present study chooses affective theory because of the students perceptions and believes about writing apprehension may influence their writing thesis.

Based on Krashen's (1982) study, he posits the influential hypothesis involving Affective Filter Hypothesis, and asserts that Second Language Acquisition (SLA) is influenced by motivation, self-confidence and anxiety. In addition, research concerned with L2 languages like English, French and Spanish resulted in consistent findings that the psychological element of the learner displayed towards L2 learning most likely impact the learning processes and hence the result to a major extent. For instance, Price (1991) provided a description of the notable influence that language anxiety has on non native learners of French and the way it impacts their language attitudes and their performances while interviewing native speakers.

Additionally, Gardner and MacIntyre (1993) claim that self-confidence may lead to heightened motivation in SLA. Several researchers found that the process and result have reciprocal impact upon the psychological state of the learner (Scovel, 1996). Therefore, the learners' affective factors must be delved into in research concerning Non- Native Speakers (NNS) and Native Speakers (NS).

### 2.4.2 Social Cognitive Theory

Bandura (1986) provides a definition of the social cognitive theory as "the belief that all knowledge is constructed in a social context in a complex and recursive manner unique to each individual learner, and that the usefulness of constructed knowledge is determined by its effectiveness in that social context" (p. 10). He states that social cognitive theory proposes that the entire meaning is developed in a social environment as opposed to being passed down in the form of an absolute from authority figures. In other words, based on this theory, it is the manifested positive or negative results of the behaviors that encourages or discourages their use. This is real even in cases where the behaviors and their outcome happen to some other individuals, rather than to the observing individual.

According to Dong (1998), language, cultural, and educational backgrounds may affect students to write their thesis effectively. He stated that the thesis advisor has a key role in socializing the mentee into the disciplinary community through his supervision. Educators and researchers have raised varying issues concerning the supervision of postgraduate research students hailing from diverse linguistic and cultural background and this has brought up many challenges for supervisors and

students (Andrade, 2006; Harman, 2003; Holbrook & Johnson, 1999; Ryan & Zuber-Skerritt, 1999).

McClure's (2005) qualitative study examined Chinese international students' experiences of supervision in the first stage of their thesis writing. The participants were from the field of engineering. The novel learning environment called for the students' increasing responsibility for the direction and management of their research but some students found it extremely difficult to view their new learning environment as they were still confined to their previous educational and cultural understanding. The study further highlighted the cultural factors related to postgraduate supervision of international students at the beginning of the supervisory practice.

A related study conducted by Wang and Li (2008) examined the challenges faced by international postgraduate students at the University of Canberra, Australia during thesis writing. They made use of semi-structured interviews to obtain data from the participants comprising eleven international students from Thailand, China, Malaysia, India, Maldives and Bahrain, who were at different stages of Doctorate or Master Degrees. Out of the total number of participants, four had presented their initial seminars and their research proposals had been approved, four were writing thesis draft chapters and three had already submitted their completed thesis. Their thesis topics included Education, Information Science, Law, Management, Economics, Communication and Tourism. The participants attributed the challenges they face while thesis writing to differences in cultural backgrounds and academic

traditions that they brought to the research. The study concluded that culture impacts thesis writing in general, efforts in developing competence and confidence in academic writing and the students' pedagogical requirements in thesis writing.

It has been contended by Davis (1996); and Fox (1990) as well as other researchers that the challenge in writing most of the time is in the inattention to or the difference in cultural, gender or socioeconomic factors. Based on Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory, this assessment is true and both the understanding of content and the development of skills happen in a social context as opposed to being hidden skills set apart from the affective domain. Both the influence of student perceptions upon writing and the impact of teacher behaviors on student beliefs of writing serve as areas of research (Pajares & Cheong, 2004). Conversely, social cognitive theory presents some resonance in the field of secondary English instruction for reading, but a similar notion cannot be contended regarding writing instruction.

Social cognitive theory highlights the way skills and behaviors displayed by the instructor in the classroom may be considered by the students as useful in the achievement of success within a social setting, although they are different from the student's own familiar experience and behavior (Bandura, 1997). Based on social cognitive theory, newly acquired skills and behaviors displayed in the classroom can be included in the complex social matrix in which the student is within, particularly when some elements of control is given by the teacher to the student (Bandura, 1997; Lunenburg, Sartori & Bauske, 1999). Students who consider writing to be useful

and productive in a specific setting display a minimal degree of both writing apprehension and resistance (Pajares, Johnson & Usher, 2007).

It has been evidenced by several researchers that many factors linked to teachers' behaviors and beliefs can theoretically minimize students' writing apprehension. Initially, when teachers display similar behavior and produce the same result as their students, the students are more inclined to be engaged in the activities since modeling suitable desired behaviors is a great motivator within learning contexts (Bandura, 1986). When students are provided with some kind of control in their writing and when a student-centered classroom is facilitated, the students are less apprehensive and they are inclined to produce more writing (Donlon, 1990; Pajares, 2003; Rose, 1983). Moreover, students experiencing a level of success in a supportive environment are inclined to persevere as compared to their counterparts who are not in one (Bandura, 1986).

Regarding the influences of the cultural background on the thesis writing process, Wang and Li (2008) interviewed one international student from Bahrain who was studying over-sea at University of Canberra, Australia. The researcher found that due to culture differences the students had difficulties when writing their thesis or dissertations because they were required to follow the new academic environment, writing styles, and the way of thinking, which were considered a big challenge. The Bahraini students said:

> As an Arab we have a different writing. We give direction first and at
> the end you will find like the conclusion or the things you want to say.
> I find in English it is not that way, it is mostly you find the important

things in the top and down is the explanation. So vice versa. So in my thinking, I have to switch from this idea to the English idea.

Wang and Li (2008) found that students from Thailand, Chinese and Arabic cultures who were studying at University of Canberra, Australia might be used to a writing convention which values a deliberate delay of the central argument towards the conclusion to satisfy the curiosity of the reader. Such differences in reader expectations in different languages and cultures were clearly evidenced in the students' comments on the difficulties they encountered in thesis writing.

Another example of the cultural background when writing thesis in English language, the Bahraini student commented that direct critique, which is emphasised in English writing, seems to be less valued in the Arabic culture. The Bahraini student said:

> In Arabic culture mostly, people are not criticising directly, so this is also like affect my writing. ….This is like no respect in our culture. It is not easy to tell you are wrong and I will correct you. But according to my culture which I came from, it is not easy to say you are wrong. We are always like, even when we write or we speak, we are away from that direct critique. Now I have to switch to critique directly.

Wang and Li (2008) suggest that it is important for international students to understand their supervisors' expectations and academic standards, at the same time, it is also equally important for supervisors to understand international students' unique pedagogical needs and develop intercultural sensitivity in their pedagogical

practice in postgraduate research supervision. Such understanding is vital for enhancing international students' educational experiences.

The researcher of the present study chooses socio-cognitive theory as a guide because it focuses on the difference in culture and socio-economic factors which can increase writing apprehension. In addition, the interaction between the Jordanian PhD students in UUM and their supervisors from other countries may affect their thesis writing because of culture differences. Moreover, the supervisors' behaviors and beliefs may increase or decrease students' writing apprehension.

## 2.5 Causes of Writing Apprehension

ESL and EFL learners often face challenges while writing in English language because of writing apprehension. According to Lindy (2006), people are not generally born as apprehensive writers but they experience apprehensiveness through the negative and challenges that they go through while writing. The contexts of learning writing differs from one culture to another but the commonality lies in the challenging experience that language learners face while writing. Several researchers have explored the causes of writing apprehension and among them are Weil and John (1956) who discovered that psychology may be the cause of writing apprehension. The researchers compared it to stage-fright in writers and this psychological cause is related to the following causes: (1) Overestimation on the part of the writer of his or her deficiencies as a writer, (2) Inadequate time to complete writing assignments, (3) An inability in the writer to see the purpose of his or her

reports, leading to a belief that writing is a waste of time, (4) Excessive criticism and repeated, arbitrary revision of the writer's work by editors and supervisors.

Al-Khasawneh (2010) explored the writing problems and their causes in Arab students' writing courses at the College of Business programs (COB) in Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM). The study involved 10 Arab postgraduate students and data was obtained through face to face interview. The results revealed that the students felt challenged by their lack of vocabulary, organization of ideas, grammar, spelling, and referencing. The study concluded by providing the causes of writing problems: (1) Weak foundation such as the status of English, the students' motivation to learn English, and the teachers' lack of interest, (2) Environment reasons such as the use of the mother tongue, few opportunities to practice English, and isolated culture, (3) Methods of teaching English in their countries such as using Arabic in English classes, (4) Writing done in Arabic, (5) Teachers' low proficiency in English, (6) Lack of writing practice in educational institutions. Al-Khasawneh's (2010) study is important because it is the only study that focused on the difficulties that Arab postgraduate students experience in writing in UUM. This study, however, has some limitations. For example, Al-Khasawneh's (2010) study has used only one method for the study of perception. Hence, perception can be examined using document analysis. Regarding the participants, those who served as native speakers of Arabic came from two region of Arab (the Middle East) and they may not be representative. Thus, Al-Khasawneh's (2010) study has interviewed Arab postgraduate students in College of Business only. The present study, the researcher has interviewed Jordanian PhD students in different colleges in UUM.

Lin and Ho (2009) also conducted a study exploring the causes of writing apprehension at a college located in Southern Taiwan. The researchers collected data through interviewing sixteen undergraduate students after taking a writing course. The outcome of the study was categorized into five different challenges that the students felt they were up against. These challenges were: (1) Issues of time restriction such as thinking of the limitation of a time during testing or classes, (2) Issues of teacher's evaluation such as students are looking for teacher's evaluation and negative comments in their work, (3) Issue of peer competition such as peer's comment and attitudes of competition, (4) Issues of writing subjects, (5) Issue of required writing format. Thus, this study is important as it explored the causes that ESL/EFL experience when writing in English.

A similar study was conducted by Daud et al. (2005) involving 186 third year university students at MARA, Malaysia. The target subjects admitted to suffering from anxiety stemming from their lack of writing skills attributable to lack of vocabulary knowledge and experience of language use. It was concluded that writing teachers needed to modify their teaching of writing from a lecture-based model which was found to be ineffective. It is recommended that teachers encourage students in using the target language in an authentic way. The study concluded that low performing students had higher apprehensiveness in writing compared to high performing students. Thus, this study is important as it explained the causes among Asian students in regarding to the writing apprehension.

More recently, A study was done by Kara (2013) on 150 first year students studying at Anadolu University in Turkey found the students having writing anxiety. They had problem in writing because they were not used to write but were familiar in taking tests. Thus, this study is important as it explored the causes of writing apprehension on the countries in the Middle East. As we noticed that the previous studies have investigated writing apprehension on undergraduate students. This study has discovered writing apprehension among postgraduate students.

In a more detailed study, Daly (1978) found that the high apprehensive students faced problems dealing with agreement, punctuation, adjectives and adverbs, case, recognition of sentence fragments, pronouns, diction, recognition of faulty references, and parallelism. Daly (1977) discovered one of the most critical causes which is negative comments from teachers could discourage students and decrease their self- confidence, reinforcement and satisfaction. This was further explained by Daly and Wilson's (1983) discovery that on receiving positive comments from their teachers, the students lose some of their apprehensions. Daly and Wilson (1983) assert that students who are encouraged through phases of their writing tend to have positive attitudes towards the activity. In addition, Gee's (1972) result in a study involving 300 college freshmen which consequently revealed a positive relationship between a writer's confidence and the ability to write. As noted above, the studies such as (Daly, 1977; Daly, 1978; Daly and Wilson, 1983; Gee, 1972) which were included in this review investigated the causes of writing apprehension on native speakers of English. However, explanations on the data collection and data transcribe were not explained well.

Coming from another perspective, Aldrich (1982) ascribed the causes of writing apprehension to the lack of knowledge in the preparation and the lack of methods that one's occupational writing requires. A study was conducted by Daly (1978) to investigate the causes of writing apprehension and the researcher gave nine interrelated explanation for writing apprehension: (1) Lack of appropriate skills, (2) Teachers' reaction to mechanical problems, (3) The nature of writing assignments, (4) The tendency associate writing with aversive consequences, (5) Perceptions by the apprehensive writer that teachers are a source of punishment, (6) Public comparisons of students' work that lead to ridicule and cause the writer embarrassment, (7) Negative reactions by teachers to the content of compositions, (8) Poor self-perceptions on the part of writers and (9) Inadequate role models. Thus, this study might obtain other causes of writing apprehension.

Another scholar who investigated the cause of writing apprehension was Newkirk (1979). The researcher found the following causes: (1) Perfectionism is one reason that may cause writing apprehension, (2) Length, topic, and time allowed for the writing exercise is another cause of writing apprehension and lastly, fear of evaluation. Similarly, Daud et al. (2005) provide two causes of writing apprehension among students at MARA University in Malaysia: lack of vocabulary knowledge and experience of language.

Clark (2005) provides a summary of the beliefs about the causes of writing apprehension among freshman students at Chandler-Gilbert Community College. These perspectives include: (1) Fear of evaluation, criticism, or being graded, (2) Lack of confidence in writing ability and potential, (3) Lack of knowledge or

understanding necessary to complete the writing task, (4) Prediction of writing as hard work, (5) Not being adequately prepared to write, (6) Having to write a large amount over a short period of time, (7) Being a perfectionist or trying to make their papers perfect, (8) Trying too hard to write effectively, (9) Having too much information and being unsure of how to narrow it down, (10) Not having enough information to fill the page requirement, (11) Having a negative attitude towards one's self as a writer and/ or writing in general and (12) Procrastination.

On the other hand, Tighe (1987) mentions only two main causes of students' writing apprehension and these are: (1) Critical comments, (2) Fear of evaluation. Similarly, in investigating writing apprehension among Egyptian EFL university students, Latif (2007) reveals the following causes of writing apprehension: (1) Lack of linguistic knowledge like grammar and vocabulary knowledge, (2) Low foreign language competence, (3) Poor history of writing achievement and perceived writing performance improvement, (4) Low English writing self-efficacy, (5) Instructional practice of English writing and (6) Fear of Criticism. Even though these two studies are done on EFL context especially from Arab context but still there are differences in relation to the causes that might discovered from Jordanian PhD students and the relationship between supervisors and their students which might affect them in writing.

Another study explored the causes of writing apprehension involving a group of advanced level English language learners preparing to enrol in courses and who displayed high levels of writing apprehension. Rankin-Brown (2006) found that the

apprehension of the group stemmed from the following feedback by the students: (1) The students were frustrated from self evaluation and self expectations of how well one should write; (2) Teachers evaluation of their writing; (3) Student's evaluation (peer evaluation of writing); and (4) Fear of losing one's identity when using new rhetorical styles and patterns of writing. Rankin-Brown (2006) added that three out of these four writing apprehension causes concentrated on the fear of evaluation for various reasons such as: (1) Anxiety when believing little to no progress was being made in learning English and (2) Anxiety stemming from error analysis, which, in turn, led to feelings of inadequacy as a writer. The researcher also explains that some participants displayed various beliefs regarding writing in English. Some of them believed that English writing was a waste of time while some of them lost interest in English writing due to the following reasons: (1) they would not write so much after graduating from the university and (2) they expressed that their writing was not sophisticated enough for others to understand. Thus, this study is important as it extended the causes of writing apprehension through students' perspectives.

Fox (1980) found that some of the participants in the group admitted that their difficulties in organizing their ideas and thoughts stemmed from various reasons such as: (1) They were unfamiliar with U.S. academic rhetorical guidelines and (2) Teacher's feedback or disinterest. Thus, this study is important as it extended the causes of writing apprehension through students' perspectives. The participants in Fox study's added that some of the teachers did not possess sufficient experience, knowledge and training to teach writing in classes while at the same time, some teachers did not show support to students in writing. Upon being asked to compare

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their writing anxiety to the times that they felt anxious, the participants stated that they felt anxious in times when they were asked to speak in public, when driving and being unable to read directions or signs in an efficient way, and when going on a blind date. All the participants in the group admitted to having high levels of anxiety when they attempted to write.

On the other hand, Reeves (1997) asserted that writing apprehension could be associated with different factors like socio-economic status, location, gender, and psychological punishing. Reeves's (1997) study claimed that one participant admitted to being an apprehensive writer due to her poor background, her rural roots, her gender and the psychological punishment that she received from her teachers. From that day on, the participant became apprehensive in everything as the experiences worked on eroding her confidence little by little. Thus, the study is very important in relation to highlighting the causes of writing apprehension from her own expereinece. In the present study, the researcher has focused on the background of the particpants.

A similar study was conducted on the causes of writing apprehension. Boice (1993) went through 100 manuscripts produced by college professors for the determination of the most widespread causes and cures of writing blocks and writing anxiety. The author discovered causes of writing apprehension like:

➢ Negative Comments. The existence of internal censors acts to freeze the writer who receives negative comments from teachers and other authority

figures. The censors generally cause the writer to stop from writing what they are about to.

➢ Fear of failure. This is the next most general causes of writing anxiety (Boice, 1993). The study revolved around college professors whereby this cause is particularly critical as the shortcomings of writing impacts every facet of an academic's life and livelihood. It starts from the thesis process and proceeds throughout the student's academic career. According to Boice (1993), fear of failure "is, first of all, rooted in anxiety and, so resembles phobias" and "the result becomes one of avoiding the experience of fear, stated another way, blocking can become a fear of fear" (p. 24).

➢ Perfectionism. Boice (1993) is of the opinion that writing apprehension is not often linked to fear of failure. Boice refers to the studies of college students who achieved high scores on instruments identifying fear of failure and stated that those students are inclined to set unreasonable, extreme and unrealistic goals for themselves that lead to the fear that they feel. Generally, perfectionists do not determine themselves this way although they hesitate to initiate writing until they feel that they are considered worthy by their target audience.

Early experience was shown to be linked to internal censors since this becomes "the focus on early classroom traumas with authoritarian and opaque teachers" (Boice, 1993, p. 25). According to Boice, early experience should be considered as separate cause due to its basis on specific experiences with uncooperative teachers employing detrimental methods to confidence building and improvement skills (p. 25).

➤ Another widespread cause of writer's block stems from procrastination; a reason stemming from prior reasons. Nevertheless, Boice (1993) claims that this reason is distinct from others:

> Recent investigations have distinguished its components to include self disparagement, emotional cycles of good intentions followed by shame, fear of failure and poor self confidence and task management skills, and business displays combined with patterns of bingeing work (p. 25).

In sum, Boice (1993) asserts that the entire causes of writing blocks can stem from one single element. The author believes that writers experiencing writer block often suffer from a lack of tacit knowledge required for successful writing. Accordingly, learners have not been instructed with the most crucial skills, and writing fluency. More importantly, teachers fail to teach strategies in improving writing fluency due to its widespread belief that it is practical knowledge which students should naturally have.

On the other hand, Selfe (1984) decides to study the notion from a different angle by studying the reasons of writing apprehension from the students' point of view and how these apprehensions impact their writing. The researcher's case study involved highly apprehensive student – Bev who procrastinated on her writing assignment and did not write until the day before the assignment was due. The initial draft was done very fast and lacking prewriting strategies like outlining ideas. The student's concern was more concentrated on mechanical errors as opposed to errors linked to

organizational and development of ideas and thoughts. The student concentrated on local errors and omits ambiguous phrases and sentences as opposed to rewriting them during revision. When questioned about the writing, Bev used the words "fear" and "hate" and she attributed her apprehension to lack of writing instruction and writing assignments when she was in primary and secondary schools.

The researcher reviewed previous native and non-native studies. He also explained the significance of these studies in some detail and their relevance to the present study. Next, the researcher synthesized the findings of these studies. Following this, the researcher reviewed other studies that are particularly relevant to the present study.

It can be seen that the studies above (Al-Khasawneh, 2010; Boice, 1993; Clark, 2005; Daud et al., 2005; Kara, 2013; Latif, 2007; Lin and Ho, 2009; Rankin-Brown, 2006) identified the causes of writing apprehension on native and non-native of English language. In the following paragraphs the researcher briefly explained the data collection and data analysis methods employed in these studies followed by synthesizing the findings from these studies.

Most of the studies discussed above used interviews to discover the causes of writing apprehension such as those studies done by (Al-Khasawneh, 2010; Clark, 2005; Daud et al., 2005; Kara, 2013; Latif, 2007; Lin & Ho, 2009). Other studies such as by (Boice, 1993; and Rankin-Brown, 2006) have analysed students' papers to discover the causes of writing apprehension. Consequently, the researcher of the

present study takes this issue into consideration and he therefore used interviews with Jordanian EFL students to discover the causes of writing apprehension. In addition, the triangulation method made with interviewing students supervisors to identify the causes that Jordanian EFL students experience when writing their PhD thesis.

Moreover, very few studies have discovered writing apprehension on Arab students (Latif, 2007). It can be seen that the previous studies have been done on undergraduate students except for in Al-Khasawneh (2010) study's on postgraduate students. The researcher of this study has taken this issue into consideration to study writing apprehension on postgraduate students to fill in this gap. The findings of the previous studies reviewed above are mostly consistent. The researcher has noticed that few research have identified the causes of writing apprehension when writing PhD thesis.

Abu Shawish and Atea (2010, p.2-3) summarize the causes of writing apprehension among ESL/EFL learners as follows:

1. Focus and overemphasis on form i.e. on grammar, punctuation, and generally perceptive writing (Abdul-Fattah, 1995; Gungle and Taylor, 1989).

2. Related to the above is the writing tutors' adoption of product approach (Stapa & Abdul Majid, 2009).

3. Serious writing anxiety problems are attributed to instructors' not teaching the teachable aspect of writing (Grundy, 1985).

4. Students develop high level of writing apprehension because of their writing being evaluated whether the evaluation source is self, teachers or peers (Rankin-Brown, 2006).

5. This applies to feedback given in evaluative context (Borich, 2004).

6. Students deficits in skills training and poor teacher negative responses to early writing attempts affect their later levels of writing anxiety (Harvley-Fedler, 1978).

7. Lack of revision and revision skills can lead to writer's block, as the writing to achieve perfection in the initial draft (Fritzsche, Rapp-Young & Hickson, 2003). This is known in the literature as perfections (Boice, 1993).

To sum up, it can be seen that the causes of writing apprehension may vary from one study to another or from culture to culture. In collectivist cultures such as Asian, USA, and Arabs have shared some causes such as fear of evaluation and grammatical errors that make students' apprehensive in writing. Some Arab studies such as Abdul-Fattah (1995); Abu Shawish and Atea (2010); Salem (2007) have given some causes which were not mentioned by other cultures such as teaching writing using their mother tongue. It is the main cause of writing apprehension in their studies. It also can be seen from the literature that writing apprehension has not been studied adequately in Arabic culture.

## 2.6  Effects of Writing Apprehension

The impact of writing apprehension which does not originate from the individual can be categorized into four types: academic, cognitive, social and personal. Majority of studies have looked into the link between writing apprehension and foreign language performance and among them are by Aldrich (1982); and Stapa (1994). Evidence points to the fact that apprehensive writers feel the need to account for the negative effects of anxiety through an increased effort through learning. Based on a series of experiments that examined the impacts of language anxiety on cognitive processing, some research found the impacts to be highly pervasive. In the learning process, anxiety can block the person's ability to process new information in the target language and if the new words fail to be encoded in the memory, they cannot be processed or used.

Along the same line of study, Al-Ahmad (2003) states that majority of studies investigated the factors causing the increase of writing apprehension levels among student writers. Some of the studies attributed the increase of apprehension to any of the following:  the history of classroom writing instruction, particularly, and traditional classroom instruction which emphasizes the student's final written product over the act of composing. Emig (1971) supports the notion by stating that the teacher is "interested chiefly in a product he/she can criticize rather than in a process he/she can help initiate through imagination and sustain through empathy and support" (p. 97).

The considerable amount of literature has also been stated by Marshall and Varnon (2009) who point out that researchers have investigated various variables of writing apprehension in the educational environment. Among these research, Daly and Miller's (1975a) study have explored the relationship between writing apprehension and choice of occupation. In addition, Daly and Wilson's (1983) study has also stressed on self-concept, and oral communication apprehension, while Onwuegbuzie (1998) concentrates on the relationship between writing apprehension and learning styles.

Researchers have explored the link between writing apprehension and form as opposed to content. This has been pointed out by Emig (1971) who states that writers tend to worry about form comprising of spelling, punctuation, and length as opposed to the content. These concerns more often result in negative impacts upon the student writers, heightening their apprehension levels and consequently leading to their negative attitudes toward writing. It is imperative to keep in mind that factors that may increase writing apprehension should be looked into among second/foreign language learning. Al Ahmad (2003) discovers through a thorough look at the past literature that writing apprehension has a strong link with factors such as writing performance, self-esteem, self-efficacy, individual experience, attitude and motivation, occupations decisions, and self competence. The following section will deal with these factors beginning with writing performance.

### 2.6.1 Writing Performance

The effect of writing apprehension on writing performance can be a predictor of the quality of the writing. The role that writing apprehension plays in low writing achievement and performance are widely acknowledged by students, teachers, and researchers (Hettich, 1994). Takahashi (2009) defines language proficiency as "a person's general level of ability in the target language, class performance is a person's achievement in the class" (p.90). The researcher considers two core assumptions which are linked to performance and proficiency. The initial assumption is that writing apprehension is negatively related to writing performance which may hinder learner's English learning in the classroom while the other assumption is that writing apprehension is negatively linked to proficiency which stem out from the learners' minds.

According to Stapa (1998), writing apprehension clearly impacts writing performance. Majority of researchers have looked into the relation between writing apprehension and writing performance. Among them, Faigley et al., (1981) who suggest that highly apprehensive writers have a bigger possibility of receiving low grades in composition compared to less apprehensive students. Additionally, Book (1976) reveals that high apprehensive students write three times less words compared to the low apprehensive students. She also finds that messages created by high apprehensive students comprise of less paragraphs, less words in each paragraph, less sentences, less nouns, pronouns, adjectives and prepositional phrases. In addition, high apprehensive students make comparatively more spelling errors compared to low apprehensive ones and essays written by the former do not contain

as much information as those written by the latter. Finally, Book finds that essays written by low apprehensive students contain more information than their high counterparts. In terms of writing quality, Daly (1978) has similar view as that held by Book (1976) whereby his study showed a significant relationship between apprehension and quality evaluations. He also found that essays written by low apprehensive students were significantly better in quality than those written by high apprehensive students.

The study carried out by Gardner et al. (2005) involved the investigation of all levels of undergraduate Accounting students at a New Zealand University. The results show that in written communication apprehension, there is only a slight link between levels of apprehension and academic performance. There is a small but significant negative relationship between written CA and course performance.

Corbett-Whittier's (2004) study was on the effects of anxiety on performance at all levels. It was found that anxiety erodes the intellect and results in failure. Goleman (1995) further states that "the anxious are more likely to fail even given superior scores on intelligence test" (p. 83). In addition, Goleman (1995) states that "Anxiety also sabotages academic performance of all kinds: 126 different studies of more than 36,000 people found that the more prone to worries a person is, the poorer their academic performance, no matter how measured" (p. 83).

**2.6.2 Individual's Experience**

Reeves's (1997) study show that individual experience of writing anxiety presents a self-concept and a notable lack of self-confidence. Furthermore, Reeves expounds on the negative experience in the classroom by stating that "these students report poor success in prior experiences with school related writing and many incidents of negative teacher responses to prior attempts at writing" (p. 38). In other words, Reeves states that students are often apprehensive when writing personal narratives as they have to provide an expression of their personal feelings, beliefs, and experiences. On the contrary, students may feel less apprehensive when writing argumentative essays as it is not required for them to include their personal feelings and the use of first person point of view is unnecessary. Those experiencing high apprehensiveness may show it through their behaviors and attitudes which would eventually be reflected in their writings (Reeves, 1997). Students tend to select professions that they think has less writing requirement or sometimes none at all. While still in school, these individuals try to avoid writing courses and overlook programmes that require for extensive writing as they lack writing practice outside of the classroom. Reeves stresses that this avoidance behavior is partially attributable to the absence of writer role models.

Steve and Tonia's (1999) study involving 687 first and second year students of English at a Japanese Junior College found the following factors that influence WAT questionnaire: (1) Negative perceptions about writing ability, (2) Enjoyment in writing, (3) Fear of evaluation and (4) Fear of showing one's writing to others. A significant correlations between writing apprehension and scores of the Test of

English as foreign language (TOFEL) was also established as well as the significant correlations between writing apprehension and writing experience.

Individuals generally suffer from writing anxiety particularly when they receive lower scores on the verbal test ability, reading comprehension and tests of writing ability used for college placement (Reeves, 1997). It is however unclear whether anxiety is the reason for the lower scores or the lack of knowledge and skills is the reason for both anxiety and the scores. Nevertheless, it is clear that the students having writing anxiety do not necessarily lack in motivation. Other types of behaviors are also found to be linked to the writing outcome. The students seem to have more difficulties in searching for ideas they can write about. Their writings are shorter; their ideas are simple and less developed compared to those having no writing anxiety. Furthermore, they display more difficulties in areas of usage and mechanics and varied sentence structures (Reeves, 1997).

### 2.6.3 Self-Esteem

Self-esteem is considered to be an individual's judgment of his worth during interactions with other individuals (Daly & Wilson, 1983). Self-esteem becomes a target when learners are confident in their native language but lack proficiency in the target language. It has been shown that students with high self esteem can manage their anxiety better compared to those with low self-esteem, and therefore, are capable of presenting higher performance (Daly & Wilson, 1983). However, several studies including McCroskey, Richmond, Daly, and Falcione (1977) have not succeeded in finding a significant link between self-esteem and writing anxiety.

A similar study was carried out by Hassan (2001) involving 182 third year students at the English Department in Mansoura University, Egypt. The results showed a significant link between writing apprehension and self-esteem. In other words, high apprehensive writing individuals may also suffer from low self-esteem. Unexpectedly, the link was not strong enough to present a negative relationship between writing apprehension and writing quality. However, evidence points to the fact that students having low writing apprehension produce better writing compositions in virtue of quality as compared to their counterparts; those having high writing apprehension. Students possessing self-esteem but low writing apprehension also scored lower in their writing task judged by quantity. Nevertheless, both writing apprehension and self-esteem did not impact writing quantity task.

**2.6.4 Self Efficacy**

Latif (2007) asserts that self-efficacy is one of the top motivating constructs that has been often over looked in the study of writing apprehension. Self-efficacy is believed to be a psychological personality characteristic that is considered as an individual's self-belief of his/her ability to achieve a goal (Nowak and Krcmar, 2003). Based on Chung and Nam's study (2007) "Self-efficacy as a form of self-evaluation influences decisions about what behaviors to undertake, the amount of effort and persistence put forth when faced with obstacles, and finally, the mastery of the behavior. The outcomes people anticipate depend largely on their judgments of how well they will be able to perform in given situations" (p. 216).

Along similar lines, a study was carried out by Popovich and Masse (2005) involving 127 fresh journalism students in Midwestern University who attended their first college journalism writing class during the 16th week. The results of the study showed that instructors looked into the mindset of the group of journalism and communication students who attended introductory media writing classes. It also set a platform where it was made clear that self-efficacy issues as well as pedagogical approaches' implementation should be called for to facilitate the students' confidence building and understanding of the role of writing skills in their education and professional development. Eight factors were believed to impact writing apprehension: General affects, Blank Page Paralysis, Mechanical Skills Competence, Evaluation Apprehension, Career and Essential Skills, Task Avoidance, Audience Salience and Facts vs. Ideas.

Along similar lines, Bandura (1997) states that individual beliefs of her/his learning capabilities can pinpoint what he/she do with his/her knowledge and skills. Self-efficacy beliefs have a great impact on the individual's behavior as it determines his/her goal achievement and the amount of effort. The perseverance he/she displays while facing challenges and her/his thought patterns and emotional responses (Pajeres & Johnson, 1994, p. 314). Specifically, writing self-efficacy has been viewed as the individual's judgment of her/his writing skills (McCarthy, Meier & Rinderer, 1985), or the individual's confidence of her/his 'ability to successfully perform writing tasks at a given level' (Shell, Murphy & Bruning, 1989, p. 91).

Pajares (2003), one of the pioneer researchers who investigated self efficacy investigated the link between writing anxiety and self efficacy since 1990s. The researcher and his colleagues carried out studies involving students and adults of different ages and developmental stages. The research consistently showed that "although writing apprehension typically correlates with writing performance, when self-efficacy beliefs are controlled; the influence of apprehension is nullified" (Pajares, 2003, p. 144). In other words, these results show that writing apprehension is partially caused by low self-efficacy, and "if self-efficacy beliefs are a cause of variables such as writing apprehension, interventions designed to improve writing by decreasing anxiety may be useful to the degree that they increase students' confidence in their writing ability" (p. 144).

**2.6.5 Attitude and Motivation towards Writing**

There are two factors that are viewed as the most critical factors that impact learning in college composition; motivation and student attitudes (Eulart, 1976). In addition, learning to write hinges on the student's self image, personal attitudes and motivation. Based on this assumption, Eulart asserts that the teacher should focus their instruction on changing student's attitudes.

On the other hand, Stapa (1998) states that students' feelings regarding writing tasks generally impact the learning that they may or may not undergo. But simultaneously, teachers claim that students possessing positive attitudes towards writing generally display a good level or writing. Additionally, Kroll (1979) claims that "positive attitudes lead to more writing, and it is only by practicing writing that

one can learn to write well" (p. 6). Evidences exist to Kroll's claims that "attitudes definitely influence growth in writing, that a writer's degree of apprehension toward writing can be measured and that certain teaching strategies can lessen student's writing anxiety" (Holladay, 1977, p. 2). Contrastingly, students having negative attitudes towards writing turn out to be good writers. Consequently, the common scenario is that teachers blame their students' poor performance on their poor attitude toward writing.

According to Stapa (1998), teachers can be categorized into two types: those who accept students who perform poorly but do nothing to improve their skills, and those who encourage students to improve their writing skills believing that positive feedback and positive writing experience may lead to the student's writing development.

### 2.6.6 Academic and Occupational Decisions

Researchers like Daly and Shamo (1978), and Miller and Daly (1975) relate writing apprehension with academic and occupational decisions. Similarly, Daly (1981) looks into the highly apprehensive individuals who opt to choose occupations and academic majors that do not need much writing. Contrastingly, low apprehensive individuals prefer jobs and academic majors involving a high amount of writing.

This is further evidenced by a study carried out by Daly and Shamo (1978) involving ninety-five undergraduate students. The result showed that individuals with high writing apprehensiveness looked for professions having low writing requirements

rather than those with high writing demands. In other words, the choices of profession of individuals having high writing apprehensiveness are characterized by low perceived communication requirements as compared to the choices by the individuals with low writing apprehensiveness.

### 2.6.7 Writing Quality

The impact of writing apprehension upon writing quality has also been the topic of several research. Among these research, Daly (1977) found a significant relationship between apprehension and quality evaluations, for instance, essays written by low apprehensive individuals were examined and proven to be more significantly better as opposed to those written by highly apprehensive writers.

A similar study was carried out by Richmond and Dickson-Markman (1985) involving 135 undergraduate students' completion of the writing apprehension tool, the anxiety test and the composition of a brief essay. The study necessitated the division of the students into three groups based on their writing apprehension and the result found a significant relationship between apprehension and writing quality. Highly apprehensive writers were judged of a poorer quality as compared to those written by middle-apprehensive writers. On the other hand, low apprehensive writers composed essays that were of high quality as compared to those written by middle-apprehensive writers. A similar analysis of covariance controlling for the purpose of anxiety test had the same outcome.

### 2.6.8 Self Competence

Among the researchers who carried out a study on self-competence are Daly and Witte (1978) who looked into the differences between high and low apprehensive individuals based on several standardized measurements of writing competency. The results of the study presented a significant difference between high and low apprehensive individuals in the performance of the following tests: the Test of Standard Written English, the English Composition Test, the SAT verbal measure, and the SAT vocabulary subtest.

Latif (2007) concludes that the outcome of the following studies showed that L2/FL writing apprehension is correlated with foreign language classroom anxiety (Cheng, 2004), speaking anxiety (Cheng, 2004), perceived writing self-efficacy (Cheng, 2004; Rankin-Brown, 2006), language proficiency self-esteem (Hassan, 2001), writing expertise (Cornwell & McKay, 1999), free reading activities because avid readers are less apprehensive (Lee, 2003), and L1 writing apprehension (Hadaway, 1987).

Additionally, Latif (2007) states his criticism in the methodology and the context of the above few L2/FL studies by observing that: a) all the research utilized the WAT or SLWAT in the measurement of writing apprehension of their subjects; b) only two of the studies (Hadaway, 1988; Rankin-Brown, 2006) claimed to utilizing interview in the identification of factors impacting the writing affect, while the rest of the studies result hinged on closed self-reported instruments, i.e. scales or questionnaire; c) several of the above studies (e.g. Hadaway, 1988; Rankin-Brown,

2006) claimed to involve subjects having varied L1 backgrounds while others claimed to involve subjects with the same L1 backgrounds; the L1s comprised of Arabs, Chinese, Japanese and Malays; and d) English happens to be the target L2/FL in all these studies. The results of the studies require documentation through further research that could utilize both quantitative and qualitative data in the determination of the factors explaining L2/FL writers' impact and that could be parallel to Gungle and Taylor's (1989) call for a more accurate measurement of writing apprehension. Additionally, there is a clear requirement for the investigation of the factors particularly in L2/FL contexts like Arabic EFL learners.

A similar study was carried out by Elkhatib (1985) who attempted to provide a description of apprehension levels and writing behaviors possessed by Egyptian college freshmen who major in English. The author discovered that writing apprehension is linked to syntactic maturity, measured by "t-units" (t-unit- one main clause coupled with a subordinate clause or non-clausal structure that is linked or incorporated in it. A simple or complex sentence is considered as one t-shirt; while a compound or compound complex sentences is considered to consist of two or more than two t-units), and different types of particular lexical problems . Along the same lines, another study highlighted the apprehension of L2 writers (Jones, 1985). Jones's (1985) study explored non linguistics factors which involve ESL writing. He looked into non-linguistic source of difficulty in L2 writing which he defined as "a difficulty that can result either from the instructional setting or from the cognitive style of the writer, though the former is more frequently the source" (p. 96).

Similarly, Gungle and Taylor (1985) carried out an examination of the writing apprehension in an L2 setting. The researchers used the Daly-Miller Writing Apprehension Test in the pilot study and found a significant negative correlation between ESL writing apprehension and the expressed inclination to enrol in an advanced writing class. This finding was parallel to the findings of Daly and Miller (1975c) and Daly and Shamo (1978), Nevertheless, a significant relationship was neither found between ESL writing apprehension and perceived writing demand in the students' majors, nor between ESL writing apprehension and concern of the writing technique as opposed to the content.

## 2.7 Strategies to Reduce Writing Apprehension

There are innumerable ways in which writing apprehension can be reduced in students. Stapa (1998) explains why researchers concentrate on reducing writing apprehension and mentions four distinct reasons of writing apprehension. First of all, a particular amount of apprehension or anxiety is imperative for writers to succeed in writing. However, some students display a higher than usual level of writing apprehension that may impact their writing in a negative way and display poor writer's performance. Secondly, students display their necessity of developing writing skills for the purpose of garnering positive encouragement to motivate them. Thirdly, students generally feel apprehension in writing when teachers ask them to compose a text. Therefore, teachers notice this apprehension in students and they will modify their teaching instruction to lessen this writing apprehension. The instructors may focus on correcting grammar, punctuation and students. This is especially true with ESL/EFL learners.

The researcher finds through the literature that the lack of specific guidelines for treatment is tied to several theoretical issues within the composition research field. The first issue is an inconsistency with which writing apprehensive behaviors are represented, that is, a lack of systematic definitions, across the studies, necessary to discuss and research writing apprehension. The second issue concerns about the history and status of various psychological and social representations of writers within composition research discussions (Hettich, 1994).

According to Al-Ahmad (2003), researchers and teachers have made a number of attempts to decrease native learners' levels of writing apprehension. Researchers have also often listed the characteristics of students with writing apprehension including the avoidance of writing tasks, frustration feelings, and poor performance (Daly, 1977; Daly and Miller, 1975; Mabrito 1991; Scott & Timmerman, 2005). More of the treatment from teachers is discussed by Smith (1984) who asserts that the treatment of writing apprehension in a single discrete unit of instruction or during occasional activities is not effective in reducing high levels of writing apprehension. He suggests that teachers should be more concerned with planning their instructions effectively in order to heighten the students' achievement and lessen their apprehension. This planning is as follows: (1) Teachers should focus more on writing style, especially, word choice and connection, (2) Teachers should create writing through a fable, (3) Teachers should focus on argument, and should introduce expository writing.

More explanation on the procedure is provided by Al-Ahmad (2003) who said that one treatment procedure carried out by many researchers is known as collaborative learning (Fox, 1980; Smith, 1984; Tighe, 1987). Collaborative learning comprises two or more people working together in groups or pairs for the main aim of helping the writers in improving their writing abilities and in producing a coherent and a cohesive writing outcome. This type of learning, involves the selection of writing topics in every stage, as well as the generation of ideas and thought for the topic, the reading of each other's writing, the provision of peers and personal feedback and the evaluation of each other's works.

Studies on methods to treat apprehension are mostly concerned with the classroom remedies like student -oriented approaches, journal writing, positive assessment, and alternative instructional methods (Daly, 1985). Smith (1984) did a comparative review of the literature on different instructional methods to minimize writing apprehension and concluded that peer-group evaluation and clear grading criteria are the top most effective instruction that minimize students' writing apprehension.

A study conducted by Hanna (2010) found that Midwestern University students experienced writing apprehension. This apprehension might impact their ability to write effectively. Hanna discovered that students at Midwestern University in U.S.A. rarely attempted to reduce writing apprehension because they felt that the college was too late to reduce their writing apprehension. They were also not concerned about what their teachers had used to reduce their writing apprehension.

Another notable study by Fox (1980) partially supports and contradicts the above findings by Smith and Tighe (1987). The researcher employed a student-centered method of teaching composition within an experimental group including group response, peer interaction, and student-teacher conference. The controlled group was exposed to traditional, teacher-centered methods such as lectures, discussion, and teacher evaluation. The experiment's outcome showed that the treated group displayed a more notable minimal writing apprehension as compared to the controlled group and displayed writing quality that was as high as those exposed to traditional composition instruction. Fox concluded that teachers should ask the students to do more writing tasks.

Fox (1980) also conducted a study to reduce students' writing apprehension involving 101 freshman students taking English composition at the University of Missouri, Columbia. The researcher utilized a pre-post test of WAT and post test writing sample along with two teaching methods to reduce writing apprehension namely conventional method and workshop method. In addition, he divided the students into two categories: the experimental group and the controlled group. The study showed that both groups displayed a significant decrease in writing apprehension although the experimental group showed lower apprehension compared to the controlled one. Additionally, experimental treatment produced more proficiency in overall quality and length of composition compared to the conventional treatment.

Teachers have explained that they focus on the history of the language rather than writing. Thompson (1979) provides a different alternative by suggesting that teachers ought to concentrate more on learning symbols, sentences, history of language and Standard English and dialect and recommended that they also try teaching while concentrating on invention – the link between writing and thinking, and convention – development of the writer's intended message.

On the other hand, Boice (1993) provided four methods that have been employed throughout history to cure writer's block: (1) Automaticity: Boice said that this method is the oldest treatment method in the past. Scholars nowadays refuse this method because of its historical association with spiritualism and it is called free writing nowadays, (2) Regimen: Boice opponents resist regimen because it may stifle creativity and inspiration, and it may cause stress to students who are not ready to write, (3) Cognitions: It refers to internal events experienced by writers. Teaching students to think aloud to use imagery, or directed retrospection, or to utilize problem solving models to recreate their self perception through effective self talk and prior experience, (4) Social skills and supports: It emphasizes the relationship between productivity and networking. Mentoring, development activities for faculty and collaborative writing are strategies that may be used in this method. Boice (1993) concluded that all four methods worked effectively to reduce writing anxiety for a short period of time. However, none of the methods mentioned above had long term effects on writing blocks. The researcher worked with his colleagues to investigate the influence of these methods on writing block by dividing the four groups into single interventions and a fifth group was created and exposed to a

sequenced combination of the four treatments. The groups participated in the experiment for at least a period spanning a year. The group exposed to the combined interventions was the only one that displayed successful unblocking, and even this success had been described as moderate.

The above methods were followed closely by the recommendation of new methods proposed by Reeves (1997) to help reduce students writing apprehension. These new methods are listed in the following: (1) Write more, (2) Discourage appropriation of voice, (3) Listen to fearful writers, (4) Talk about past writing experiences, (5) Find patterns in students' errors, (6) Contextualize and customize, (7) Conference during drafting stages, (8) Collaborate with students for evaluation criteria, (9) Coach peers for effective response,  (10) Validate intrapersonal communication: Self-Talk, (11) Be aware of possible gender differences, (12) Vary writing modes, (13) Monitor attitudes, (14) Introduce discourse communities, (15) Talk about writers you like, (16) Give and attend public readings, (17) Share writing.

On the other hand, Fox (1980) utilized two main teaching methods namely the conventional method and workshop to treat writing apprehension among freshman in a composition English course at the University of Missouri Columbia. The researcher concluded at the end of the semester that both groups succeeded in reducing writing apprehension through these two methods even though the experimental group displayed a more effective way of reducing their writing apprehension as opposed to the control group. Fox's summary of the characteristics of the treatment experimental group is as follows: (1) Introductory large group

interaction activity; (2) Paired-student problem solving, (3) Small group problem solving, (4) Instruction in peer evaluation (5) Introductory large group "what to look for practice", (6) Small group sustained peer evaluation, (7) Specific essays objectives, (8) Six-step instructional sequence preceding each essay.

Clark (2005) made use of new ways in his attempt to reduce writing apprehension among his freshman composition writing students at Chandler-Gilbert Community College. The researcher utilized a pre-post test of WAT and qualitative data from portfolio assignments. A summary of the researcher's method is as follows: (1) Readings and in-class discussions that focused on reducing or coping more effectively with writing anxiety, (2) Writing process essay assignment designed to demystify the writing process and allow students to identify which aspects of their individual process create anxiety, (3) Writing journal, to be kept by each student, (4) One-on-one conferences with the instructor to discuss students' essays and journals, isolate possible sources of anxiety, and discuss options students could consider to reduce their anxiety. After the experiment was carried out on the student' term, the study revealed that majority of the students writing apprehension was reduced to some level at the end of the semester.

It has been reported that the reduction of writing apprehension among students is not solely the teacher's responsibility as students have a role too in it (Clark, 2005). Students hailing from Chandler-Gilbert Community College claim that they have improved themselves at the end of the course through the employment of the following strategies: (1) Developing confidence in their writing ability by having a

positive attitude and making positive self-statements, and by getting positive feedback from other students and the instructor; (2) Taking writing one step at a time, rather than trying to do everything at once and worry about everything at once; (3) Taking breaks when the anxiety begins to interfere with effective writing, but being sure to come back to the writing; (4) Getting help and feedback when stuck or unclear about something; (5) Identify and use a writing process that should make the process work for them and not against them; (6) Write an outline before starting writing; (7) Learn from others; (8) Create the right environment; (9) Write multiple drafts; (10) Try editing one's paper; (11) Go over the instruction; (12) Try to complete the assignment before the last minutes of submission; (13) Perceive the anxiety as positive rather than negative; (14) Brainstorm before writing to organize scattered thoughts or come up with ideas; (15) Do not panic right away; (16) Choose the right topic and learn more about the subject; (17) Understand what the instructor is looking for; (18) Clear mind; (19) Learn more about writing strategies; (20) Know and understand one's limit; (21) Get to know other classmates better; (22) Prepare well; (23) Accept that it is ok to make mistakes. Students claimed that through the use of these strategies, on becoming anxious, they were more capable of reducing their anxiety or used it in a positive way as opposed to letting it get the better of their writing process.

Another similar study was carried out by Tighe (1987) involving 16 students in a writing course in Alabama University. The study used a pre-post test of WAT, evaluation data and pre-post writing essays. The outcome of the study showed that majority of the students were less apprehensive towards the end of the semester as

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evidenced by the fact that most of them wrote longer and superior essays and most of them improved in their writing skills. The researcher suggested three main ways to help reduce students' writing apprehension: (1) Students should understand the aims of evaluation, (2) Students should use a task analysis; in other words, students should break down their writing into steps and activities for each level of writing and through this, writers master each step before moving to the next one, (3) It is better for students to work into small or peer groups during the final step which is the revising stage.

Daud et al. (2005) propose a few strategies that will enable the reduction of students' writing apprehension: (1) Teachers should focus more on the way they taught, a few methods may be used by the instructor such as task-based or problem- based approaches, (2) Teachers should encourage students to finish their writing tasks or help them in solving the problem given, (3) Teachers should use various strategies to improve students' knowledge of vocabulary, (4) Teachers should teach writing as a fluency rather than accuracy, (5) Teachers should ask students to correct the mistakes on their own.

Most of the studies showed above used the WAT to collect the data which is the instrument that utilized for Writing Apprehension Test. Moreover, it can be seen that the previous studies discussed earlier used a written pre and post-test of WAT with the exception of a few studies that applied methods to reduce students writing apprehension (Daly, 1985 Fox, 1980; Smith, 1984). Consequently, the researcher of the present study takes this issue into consideration and he therefore used

triangulation methods in order to investigate Jordanian EFL strategies to reduce writing apprehension in terms of perception collected by interviews, reasons provided by them for the perception ratings collected by interviews. In addition, the triangulation method made with interviewing the students' supervisors to identify the strategies that supervisors recommended to their students to reduce their writing apprehension.

The findings of the previous studies reviewed above are mostly consistent. The researcher has noticed that few research have identified the strategies that students used to reduce their writing apprehension. Most of the research have been done through teachers' perspectives and utilizing in the classroom. Abu Shawish and Atea (2010) provide a summary on the measures used on writing apprehension which exist in the literature on second/foreign language:

1. Teachers should give students writing assignment which is not graded because of the students' fear of being negatively evaluated (Clark, 2005).

2. Resorting to peer feedback as a substitute for teacher feedback when it works. This feedback should be given in a non-threatening way and in a non evaluative context (Borich, 2004; Clark, 2005; Grabe and Kaplan 1995; Kurk and Atay, 2007; Krause, 2001).

3. Teaching writing as a process rather than a final product (Clark, 2005; Grabe & Kaplan, 1995, Rankin-Brown, 2006).

4. Identifying error patterns of students make and help student-writers correct their errors rather than the teacher's correction of every single mistake. (Bernstein, 1978; Reeves, 1997; Wachholz & 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 (Boice, 1992; Dickson-Markman, 2001; Southwell, 1977; Stover, 1988; Veit, 1980).

6. Teaching reading and writing concurrently should be used as this has been found to reduce students' writing anxiety since this reduces students' errors and provides them with good writing models (Daud et al., 2005).

In sum, the researcher of the present study has illuminated the most common ways of overcoming writing apprehension. Researchers have displayed a consensus in the utilization of some ways that are critical to the reduction of writing apprehension such as collaborative and centered-oriented approaches. It has been found that through literature; only a few studies have been conducted to find ways to reduce writing apprehension through the student's viewpoint. Majority of the studies conducted in reducing writing apprehension have been carried out through teachers' perspective and experience such as by Al Ahmad (2003); Clark (2005); Daud et al. (2005); and Salem (2007). A few studies have been conducted on the strategies that students use to reduce writing apprehension.

## 2.8 Summary

The present chapter initially explains writing in general followed by the process of writing. The chapter also deals with the meaning and aspects of apprehension, communication apprehension, writing apprehension, and characteristics of high writing apprehension with the students particularly among ESL/EFL learners. The theories of writing apprehension, the causes of writing apprehension and its effects have been discussed and finally, the methods and the strategies that students used to reduce writing apprehension are discussed.

# CHAPTER THREE
# METHODOLOGY

## 3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the following sub-headings: research design, participants of the study, data collection, pilot study, trustworthiness of the study, data analysis, ethical and legal considerations and summary.

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the causes of the Jordanian Ph.D. students' writing apprehension when writing their Ph.D. thesis?

2. What are the effects of the Jordanian Ph.D. students' writing apprehension when writing their Ph.D. thesis?

3. What are the strategies that the Jordanian Ph.D. students' employed to reduce writing apprehension when writing their Ph.D. thesis?

## 3.2 Research Design

A qualitative research method, to be more specific, a qualitative case study was used in this study to enable the researcher to understand the writing apprehension phenomenon as described and experienced by the participants when writing their PhD thesis in English. Creswell (2012, p.46) defines qualitative research as "a type of educational research in which the researcher relies on the views of participants, asks broad, general questions, collects data consisting largely of words (or text) from participants, describes and analyzes these words for themes, and conducts the inquiry in a subjective, biased manner".

Creswell (2012) explains that qualitative research attempts to explore people's beliefs and attitudes, feelings and perceptions regarding an experience or a phenomenon. Qualitative researchers are more interested in the real world than in artificial laboratory conditions, so their studies are usually done in uncontrolled, natural settings. Moreover, a qualitative study was suitable for the following reasons: (1) when conducting research studies on human participants because it involves interactions for meaning, (2) to explore a problem which is little known, and (3) to give a detailed understanding of a central problem (Creswell, 2005). In this study, the researcher chose a qualitative research methodology to answer the research questions to give a detailed understanding of the writing apprehension phenomenon specifically on the causes of writing apprehension, the effect of writing apprehension from their point of view, and the strategies that the students used to reduce their writing apprehension.

The researcher decided to use qualitative research methodology because of the following reasons. First, the multiple views of reality are acceptable in qualitative tradition. Different people have different views about a phenomenon such as writing apprehension. This study focused on WA from PhD students' views and triangulated those views with their supervisors' views. Second, qualitative research tries to gain insight from the emic, or insider's perspectives instead of the etic, or outside's perspectives of the phenomenon (Merriam, 1998). This study focused on writing apprehension experience of Jordanian students when writing their PhD thesis. Third, in qualitative research the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. Lastly, qualitative research "study things in their natural settings,

attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994, p.2). This study focused on Jordanian PhD students' experience in relation to writing apprehension in UUM.

In this study, the researcher selected the qualitative case study design because it was the most suitable research design to answer the research questions. A qualitative case study is defined by Merriam as "an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit" (1998, p.27). In this study, an intensive and holistic description of WA phenomenon from Jordanian PhD students' perspectives was given. Creswell (2012) provides explanation about the nature of a study site: the site(s) may be "a person such as a student, a teacher, a principle and so on, programs, groups such as a class, a school, a community, a specific policy and so on, events, processes, activities, or multiple individuals" (p. 114). A case study was employed in this study because a case study deals with specific aspects of the individual experience (Kiriakidis, 2008). Becker (1968) states two main objectives of a case study: to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of the groups under study and to develop general theoretical statements about regularities in social structure and process.

Merriam (1998) claims that case studies in qualitative research should have three characteristics. These are particularistic, descriptive, and heuristics. In this study, the case that was studied was Jordanian PhD students in Universiti Utara Malaysia. In addition, the exact words used by the participants helped to understand the causes of writing apprehension, strategies that they used to reduce writing apprehension and

the effects of writing apprehension. In qualitative research, the setting or context in which the individual experienced the phenomenon will be described. In this study, the writing apprehension context or situation in Universiti Utara Malaysia was described to shed some light on the writing apprehension experienced by the participants.

Corbett-Whittier (2004); Hanna (2010); Huwari and Noor Hashima, (2011); and Latif (2007) found that a limited number of studies used qualitative research to study writing apprehension such as those done by Lin and Ho (2009); and Rankin-Brown (2006). On the other hand, many studies used quantitative research using writing apprehension test (WAT), and second language writing apprehension test (SLWAT) to measure writing apprehension among native and non-native of English language. So, there was a need to study writing apprehension using qualitative research to gain in-depth understanding of the phenomenon.

Moreover, the researcher decided not to use Writing Apprehension Test instrument (WAT) because some researchers have criticized it such as Cheng (2004). According to Cheng (2004, p. 314), "There seems to be plenty of room for further improvement if the WAT is to be used in future studies of second language writing. First of all, the WAT was originally developed with reference to first language learners, particularly English native speakers. It might not tap the most essential aspects of second language writing anxiety". Moreover, researchers have classified the items in WAT instrument into different factors/categories. For instance, McKain (1991) has classified WAT instrument into five categories: (1) Nine items on positive feelings

that are more or less incompatible with apprehension, (2) Nine items on self-efficacy or outcome expectancies, (3) Five items on the presence or absence of anxiety (especially evaluation anxiety), (4) One item on the value of writing and (5) Two items dealing with miscellaneous events or behaviors that might be caused by anxiety (i.e., ''I avoid writing''). Only 14 items of the total 16 are concerned with feelings and four items only are concerned with the presence of anxiety. However, Burgoon and Hale (1983) have classified WAT instrument into three dimensions representing (1) Discomfort or Ease in Writing, (2) Enjoyment of Writing, and (3) Rewards of Writing. On the other hand, Cornwell and McKay (1999) have classified WAT instrument into four factors: (1) Ten items on negative perception about writing ability, (2) Six items on enjoyment of writing, (3) Four items on fear of evaluation, (4) Six items on showing my writing to others. Shaver (1990) argues that contrary to Daly and Miller's (1975) proposed unidimensional structure, the WAT represents a multidimensional construct, comprising three dimensions of L1 learners' attitudes towards writing. However, the dimensionality of the WAT is still subjected to debate because two-factor solutions have been obtained in other studies (Bline, Lowe, Meixner, Nouri, & Pearce, 2001). These conflicting results of organizing WAT items may lead one to ask a question about the construct validity of the WAT. It should also be noted that Shaver (1990) treated the WAT as a measure of attitudes toward writing, a construct broader in scope than writing anxiety. McKain (1991) has the same point of view with Richmond and Dickson-Markman (1985) about the nature of the WAT. They examined two studies of the predictive validity of the WAT. The two studies reported by Richmond and Dickson-Markman (1985) upheld the predictive validity of the WAT because the WAT was found to be a significant

predictor of L1 achievement (i.e. the American subjects' performance on the English section of the American College Test) and L1 writing quality (i.e. the subjects' performance on a 15-minute essay). However, they doubted that the predictive power of the WAT came from anxiety. Based on the results of the low and moderate levels of writing anxiety the WAT instrument did not produce significant differences in reports of state anxiety. Richmond and Dickson-Markman (1985) noted that the WAT might be ''a measure of self-confidence in the ability to write rather than anxiety about writing'' (p. 259). Based on the reasons given about the weaknesses of WAT instrument, the researcher of this study decided to use qualitative research to answer its research questions.

## 3.3 Participants

The participants in this study consisted of 21 male Jordanian PhD students in UUM. There was no female PhD students studying in UUM before the first semester, 2011-2012 when the researcher started to conduct this study. The participants were PhD students at one of the three colleges in UUM: College of Arts and Sciences (CAS), College of Business (COB) and College of Law, Governance and International Studies (COLGIS). Besides the 21 Jordanian PhD students, the researcher also interviewed 9 supervisors to triangulate the data from the participants' perspectives. At the same time, the researcher analyzed 9 PhD proposals to triangulate with the main data.

In qualitative research, Bauer and Gaskell (2000) claim that the number of participants to be interviewed depends on "the nature of the topic, the number of different milieus that are considered relevant and the resources available" (p. 43). However, there are some general considerations to guide the decision such as limited number of interpretations or version of reality and issues of the size of the corpus to be analyzed. On the other hand, Glaser and Strauss (1967); Guba (1978); Lincoln and Guba (1985); and Maykut and Morehouse (1994) suggest that the number of participants to be interviewed would depend on the point of saturation or redundancy that is reached. Bogdan and Biklen (1998, p.62) state that the point of saturation is the "point of data collection where the information you obtain becomes redundant". Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that the number of participants that could reach data saturation is between 12 to 20 respondents. In addition, Bauer and Gaskell (2000) suggest that researchers interview 15 to 25 interviewers. Creswell (2008) states that the number of people and sites sampled are different from one qualitative study to the next one. In this study, the researcher reached the data saturation at the nineteenth student. However, the researcher continued interviewing another two students to make sure no new information could be obtained from the participants.

The type of sampling used for this study was purposive sampling in order to select information rich cases which refers to "those cases from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research" (Patton, 1999, p. 169). In this study, the Jordanian PhD students in UUM were interviewed to get their perspectives on writing apprehension. Purposive sampling enriches the range of data on a topic, and better enables the researcher to identify emerging themes

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(Creswell, 2008). In addition, many qualitative researchers employed purposive sampling in their studies (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Moreover, Merriam (1998) asserts that two levels of sampling are necessary in qualitative case studies. The first level of sampling is where the researcher needs to identify the case to be studied or the unit of analysis to be studied. In this study, the case that was studied or the unit of analysis was Jordanian PhD students in Universiti Utara Malaysia. The second level of sampling suggested by Merriam is that the research needs to purposefully select whom to interview

The sampling strategy employed for this study was homogeneous sampling which means that "the researcher purposefully samples individuals or sites based on membership in a subgroup that has defining characteristics" (Creswell, 2012, p. 208). In this study, the researcher identified four main criteria to select the participants. The first criteria was only male students were included in this study. Female students were not included because no female PhD students was studying in UUM until the first semester, 2011-2012. Therefore, the issue of gender differences did not arise in this study. Moreover, in Arabic culture, men are not allowed to meet women especially when this study involved interviewing the participants face to face.

The second criteria was that the participants of this study involved only Jordanian PhD students in UUM because they are full-time students and required to write a PhD thesis. Moreover, Corbett-Whittier (2004); Onwuegbuzie and Collins (2001); and Wiltse (2006) suggest the need to study writing apprehension among

postgraduate students. The rationale for studying postgraduate students are because "they are older, more matured and brighter than undergraduate students. Moreover, they got better grades than undergraduates, and usually work harder and more hours at jobs and studies than undergraduates. Their lives are generally more independent than those of undergraduates, and they are expected to display more intellectual ingenuity and independence of mind" (Bloom, 1981, p.1).

The third criteria was selecting whom to be the participants and how many. The total number of Jordanian PhD students in UUM for the first semester 2011-2012 was 77 students. The new students who had already registered for the first semester 2011-2012 were eight students. The researcher excluded students who registered in the first semester 2011-2012. The researcher also chose Jordanian PhD students' who already had their proposal defence because they would have gone through completing the three chapters which are Introduction, Literature Review, and Methodology. Some of the participants might have written their fourth or fifth chapters. The researcher assumed that students in the second semester were able to defend their proposal. In addition, the researcher assumed that first semester students were still in the reading process.

The fourth criteria involved who to be excluded from the study. The researcher excluded students who had studied in native English speaking countries because the researcher assumed that they would be less apprehensive when writing in English than others.

## 3.4 Profiles of the Participants

For the purpose of this study, Universiti Utara Malaysia, Sintok campus was chosen to be the case study. The researcher of this study interviewed 21 Jordanian PhD students in UUM who had already defended their proposals. Besides the fact that the researcher was one of the students at the university, he believes that UUM is striving to be a research university in 2013. UUM has organized tours to some countries in the Middle East countries such as Jordan, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia to increase the number of international students. In terms of academic, the researcher of this study tried to highlight the writing apprehension phenomenon through Jordanian PhD perspectives. The study intended to find out the causes of writing apprehension, the effects of writing apprehension and the strategies that students use to reduce writing apprehension. Furthermore, the researcher triangulated the students' responses with the supervisors to get a better understanding about the phenomenon.

The researcher of this study interviewed 21 Jordanian PhD students in UUM who had already defended their proposals. The Jordanian students ranged from 27-48 years old, while majority of them ranged from 30-40 years old. The researcher observed that most of the participants obtained their bachelor degree from Jordanian universities except for a few cases who graduated from Iraqi universities and Ukranian universities. On the other hand, 7 out of 21 participants obtained their master degree from UUM in various programmes such as human resource management, information technology and applied linguistics. Only 1 participant obtained his master degree from Ukraine, while other participants graduated from Jordanian universities. The participants of this study were from one of the three

colleges in UUM which are CAS, COB, and COLGIS. They were studying in different majors such as (4 students) Information Technology, (3 students) Accounting, (3 students) Information Communication Technology, (2 students) Human Resource Management, (2 students) Management Technology, (2 students) Tourism and Hospitality Management, (2 students) Applied Linguistics, (1 student) Management (1 student), Psychology and (1 student) Marketing. In addition, the minimum semester of the participants in this study was the fourth semester, and the maximum semester was the ninth semester. Numbers were used to represent the participants. Table 3.1 displays the profiles of the Jordanian PhD students.

*Table 3.1 Jordanian PhD profile*

| Participant | Age | Bachelor | Master | Major | College | Semester |
|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|
| 1 | 48 | Jordan | Jordan | Marketing | COB | $6^{th}$ sem |
| 2 | 30 | Iraq | Jordan | Accounting | COB | $6^{th}$ sem |
| 3 | 29 | Jordan | UUM | Human Resource Management | COB | $5^{th}$ sem |
| 4 | 27 | Ukraine | Ukraine | Management Technology | COB | $6^{th}$ sem |
| 5 | 29 | Jordan | Jordan | Information Communication Technology | CAS | $7^{th}$ sem |
| 6 | 37 | Jordan | Jordan | Accounting | COB | $9^{th}$ sem |
| 7 | 36 | Jordan | UUM | Information Technology | CAS | $6^{th}$ sem |
| 8 | 33 | Jordan | Jordan | Human Resource Management | COB | $6^{th}$ sem |
| 9 | 32 | Jordan | Jordan | Management | COB | $5^{th}$ sem |
| 10 | 34 | Iraq | Jordan | Tourism and Hospitality Management | COLGIS | $5^{th}$ sem |
| 11 | 28 | Jordan | UUM | Applied Linguistics | CAS | $4^{th}$ sem |
| 12 | 33 | Jordan | Jordan | Information Communication | CAS | $6^{th}$ sem |

| | | | | Technology | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 13 | 33 | Jordan | UUM | Accounting | COB | 6<sup>th</sup> sem |
| 14 | 29 | Jordan | Jordan | Information Technology | CAS | 6<sup>th</sup> sem |
| 15 | 46 | Jordan | UUM | Information Technology | CAS | 4<sup>th</sup> sem |
| 16 | 33 | Jordan | Jordan | Psychology | CAS | 6<sup>th</sup> sem |
| 17 | 35 | Jordan | UUM | Management Technology | COB | 6<sup>th</sup> sem |
| 18 | 31 | Jordan | Jordan | Information Communication Technology | CAS | 7<sup>th</sup> sem |
| 19 | 37 | Iraq | Jordan | Tourism and Hospitality Management | COLGIS | 4<sup>th</sup> sem |
| 20 | 30 | Jordan | Jordan | Information Technology | CAS | 5<sup>th</sup> sem |
| 21 | 41 | Jordan | UUM | Applied Linguistics | CAS | 9<sup>th</sup> sem |

Besides interviewing the students, the researcher interviewed 9 supervisors who supervised 11 of the Jordanian PhD students in order to triangulate the main data. Table 3.2 displays the profiles of the supervisors. Numbers were used to represent the participants. The supervisors' age ranged from 40-60 years old. Five out of nine of the supervisors were males while the rest were female. Information on race is displayed whereby majority of the supervisors (7 out of 9) were Malays, and 2 supervisors were Chinese. Table 3.2 showed that the minimum professional experience for most of the supervisors was 10 years in UUM except for one supervisor who started teaching in UUM 3 years ago in 2010 and the maximum experience was 23 years. These 9 supervisors said that they were supervising PhD students ranging from 3 PhD students to 15 PhD students. Only two supervisors said that none of their students had graduated, while other supervisors said that students who graduated under their supervision ranged from 1 supervisee to 7 supervisees.

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*Table 3.2 Supervisors' profile*

| Supervisor | Experience | Supervisee(s) | Graduated PhD students |
|------------|------------|---------------|------------------------|
| 1 | 23 years in UUM | 6 PhD students | 1 |
| 2 | 22 years in UUM | 14 PhD students | 3 |
| 3 | 3 years in UUM | 9 PhD students | 7 |
| 4 | 22 years in UUM | 5 PhD students | None |
| 5 | 12 years in UUM | 4 PhD students | 1 |
| 6 | 14 years in UUM | 15 PhD students | 3 |
| 7 | 16 years in UUM | 8 PhD students | 2 |
| 8 | 10 years in UUM | 7 PhD students | 2 |
| 9 | 16 years in UUM | 3 PhD students | None |

## 3.5 Data Collection

### 3.5.1 Interview

In qualitative research, the researcher is the primary instrument for gathering and analyzing the data. This study used interviews to uncover and describe the participants' perspectives on events, that is, the subjective view was the focus (Marshall and Rossman, 1995). Moreover, Merriam (1998) claims that the main purpose of an interview is to obtain a special kind of information. In this study, the researcher obtained detailed information about writing apprehension from the Jordanian PhD students studying in UUM. Patton (1990) explains the purpose of interview as

> We interview people to find out from them those things we cannot directly observe. We cannot observe feelings, thoughts, and intentions. We cannot observe behaviors that took place at some previous point in time. We cannot observe situations that preclude the presence of an observer. We cannot observe how people have organized the world and the meanings they attach to what goes on in the world. We have to ask people questions about those things. The purpose of interviewing, then, is to allow us to enter into the other person's perspective (p. 72).

Merriam (1998) states that researchers cannot observe behaviors, feelings, or how people interpret the world around them. She also states that interviewing is the best way to collect the data in case studies of a few selected individuals. The advantages of conducting the interviews in a qualitative research are that researchers gain more information while conducting the interviews because participants give specific details about their personal experiences. Gray (2004, p.213) asserts that "The logic of using the interviews as the central data collection technique is based on their exploratory potential for eliciting rich data on participants' views, attitudes and the meanings that underpin their lives and behaviour". Kvale (2007, p.7) affirms that the interview is "a construction site for knowledge, which enables interviewers to explore interviewees' interpretations of the world in which they live".

Interview was chosen because the researcher was interested to find out what was in the students' and supervisors' minds about writing apprehension phenomenon. These were things that the researcher could not observe directly. In other words, the purpose of interviewing was to allow us to enter into the other person's perspective (Patton, 2002). In addition, the interviewers can control the interviews better than observation because the interviewers can ask specific questions to elicit participants' experiences (Creswell, 2012). In this study, the researcher obtained first-hand information or gain an understanding of writing apprehension experienced by the students through interviewing.

In this study, the researcher himself conducted the interview. Merriam (1998) claims that every qualitative research should take into consideration three important attributes: a tolerance for ambiguity, sensitivity to context and data, and good communication skills. First, a tolerance for ambiguity means that the researcher has to be willing to accept uncertainties and make necessary changes in pursuit of meaning. In this study, the researcher did not have predetermined answers before going out into the field. Second, the researcher must be sensitive to the context and all the variables within it. When conducting the interviews, the researcher analyzed the participants' behaviors such as smiling, feelings, thoughts and related interest within the context of the interview questions. Third, the researcher has to possess human aspects that help establish rapport with the participants such as empathizing the interviews, the researcher paid full attention to what the participants were saying and tried to create a suitable environment that led the participants to share their ideas and experience easily.

The researcher used semi-structured interview to collect the data. The semi-structured interview was used as a guide to identify points to ask. Data was collected via semi-structured interviews, which Fontana and Frey (2000) described as "one of the most powerful ways in which we try to understand our fellow human beings" (p. 645). Furthermore, a semi-structured interview format was adopted to keep the interview focused and responsive. Mason (2002) suggests that a semi-structured approach entails a fluid and flexible structure with no rigidly sequenced script of questions, allowing researcher and interviewees to develop meanings unexpectedly and to cover significant issues of the research enquiry. The interview questions

consisted of four areas that were relevant to writing apprehension. The areas were introduction, students' perspectives of the causes of writing apprehension, effects of writing apprehension, and strategies that students use to reduce writing apprehension. During the interview, the researcher gave some attention to the conversation with the participants.

The researcher interviewed Jordanian PhD students in UUM as well as interviewing some of the supervisors to triangulate the main data. The first interview session was done with the students from 15th September 2011 until the end of November 2011. Besides that, the supervisors were interviewed from 15th October 2011 until the end of December 2011. The dates were chosen because the supervisors were not involved in teaching activity during those dates.

Initially, the researcher planned to conduct an approximately 30 minutes interview for each session. In this study, the length of interviews varies from twenty minutes to one hour and twenty minutes (Creswell, 2012). The difference in the lengths of the interviews was due to the differences in the students' speech flow and the number of events they had experienced. The researcher interviewed Jordanian PhD students in a room in the library to make sure that the environment was suitable for recording data. All the interviews were conducted one time with each interviewer. In the beginning of the interview, the researcher did some introductory explanation about the research, a word of thanks to the interviewee for agreeing to be interviewed, and then the researcher obtained permission to tape-record the interview. All the students' interviews were tape-recorded. The researcher checked the recorder before

conducting the interview to make sure it worked. The interviewer managed to make the participants open and relaxed about tape recording. The researcher showed that the answers given were interesting, straightforward, and helpful by using eye contact, nods, and other reinforcements. All the semi-structured interviews were asked in English language because all of the students and supervisors were able to understand the language well. Besides, this step was adopted to avoid any misrepresentation while translating the interview responses. However, none of the participants asked the researcher to translate the interview questions. The participants were allowed to choose the language they preferred to answer the interview questions. At the end of each session, the researcher thanked the participants for their time.

### 3.5.1.1 Students' Interview

In constructing the interview guide to be used, the researcher benefited from guidance given by his supervisor who is an expert in her own specialist field in the applied linguistics and qualitative research. In addition, fellow students also made constructive comments during the pilot study, which led to an improved version of the phrasing of the questions. After the pilot study, the interview questions for the students were divided into two main parts: the first part contained seven questions about personal information which increased better understanding for the profile of the participants. The second part contained 16 questions which focused on the three research questions in this study.

The researcher divided these 16 questions into six main parts: the first part consisted of questions related to writing in general, the second part was related to PhD writing, the third part was questions related to the writing apprehension in general, the fourth part was questions related to the causes of writing apprehension, the fifth part was related to the effects of writing apprehension, and the last part was related to the strategies to reduce writing apprehension.

The first part of the interview questions was related to writing in general. Three questions were developed to find out how Jordanian PhD students write in English and when. The rationales for the constructions of these three questions are discussed below.

1) Of the four language skills (reading, listening, speaking, and writing), which one do you consider as the most difficult? Why?

This question was designed to gather information about the most difficult skills that Jordanian PhD students face in general. It was a general a question leading to more specific questions on the difficulties of writing in English.

2) How do you find writing in English compared to writing in Arabic?

This question was designed to compare writing in English and writing in Arabic.

3) When do you write in English? Probing: assignments, sms, facebook etc. Why?

This question was designed to find out when the Jordanian PhD students write in English.

The second part of the interview guide questions was related to writing a PhD thesis. The rationale for the constructions of these two questions is discussed below.

1) What is the difference between writing a PhD thesis in English and other writing tasks?

This item was developed to find out the differences between writing PhD thesis and writing other tasks.

2) Do you think you are competent in writing your PhD proposal in English without taking any writing course? Why?

This question was constructed to find out the ability of the Jordanian PhD students to write a thesis without taking any writing course.

The third part of the interview guide questions was related to writing apprehension in general. It contained four questions; these questions focused on the concept of writing apprehension.

1) Do you experience writing apprehension in English in most situations?

This was constructed to find out that in what situation Jordanian PhD students experience writing apprehension.

2) How do you rate your writing apprehension in English-low, average, or high?

This was designed to find out the level of writing apprehension among Jordanian PhD students.

3) What kind of English writing tasks make you feel apprehensive?

This question was designed because of the necessity to know which tasks can make them apprehensive of writing.

4) Do you experience apprehension when writing your PhD proposal in English?

This question was constructed to know whether the Jordanian PhD students experience writing apprehension in English when writing their PhD proposals.

The fourth part of the interview questions was related to the main purpose of this study.

1) What are the major challenges that you have faced while writing your PhD proposal in English?

This question was adapted from Gurel's (2010) work to find out the students' perceptions of the causes of writing apprehension and the challenges that they have faced while writing their PhD proposal in English.

The fifth part of the interview questions guide was related to the main purpose of this study which is the effects of writing apprehension. Some of the questions were adapted from Atay and Kurt (2007), and some others were designed by the researcher.

1) What kind of physical changes occur when writing your PhD proposal in English?

This question was adapted from Atay and Kurt (2007). It was used in this study to describe the effects of the writing apprehension through the students' perspectives.

2) How do you feel when writing your PhD proposal in English?

This question was adapted from Atay and Kurt (2007) to find out how Jordanian PhD students feel when writing their PhD proposal in English.

3) Have you shared your experience of writing apprehension while writing your PhD proposal in English with anyone?

This question was adapted from Atay and Kurt (2007). It was constructed to get more information about their reaction if they had shared their experience with other people.

4) To what extent do you think apprehension in writing in English affects you personally?

This is the main question to discover the effect of writing apprehension.

5) Describe the interaction between you and your supervisor.

This was included to give freedom to the students to voice their opinion about the interaction between the students and their supervisors which can affect their writing negatively or positively.

The last part of the interview questions guide was related to the main purpose of this study which is the strategies that the students use to reduce writing apprehension.

1) What are the strategies that you use to reduce those challenges?

This question was adapted from Gurel's (2010) to discover the strategies that the students use to overcome writing apprehension.

### 3.5.1.2 Supervisors' Interview

The researcher interviewed 9 supervisors who supervised 11 of the Jordanian PhD students in the study. The main purpose of interviewing supervisors was to triangulate the interview data with the students' interview data. The researcher gained consent to tape-record five supervisors out of the nine. On four of the interview sessions, the researcher had to take notes and to compose reports afterwards on what was said during the interviews. The length of the interviews varied between twenty to thirty-five minutes. Altogether, the researcher collected two hours of conversations. The researcher divided the supervisors' interview into two main parts: personal information and interview questions to answer the research questions of this study. The first part is personal information. The researcher designed a few questions in order to get more information about the supervisors such as their teaching profession in UUM. These questions provided information which could make the supervisors' profile clearly.

1) How long have you been in the teaching profession in UUM?
2) How many supervisee(s) do you have at present?
3) How many doctoral candidates have you supervised so far?
4) When do you think your supervisee will graduate?

5) What is his/her stage of writing the thesis?

The second part of this session is related to the objectives of this study: the causes of writing apprehension, effects of writing apprehension, and the strategies to reduce writing apprehension. A few interview questions were designed and adapted from Gurel (2010) to answer the research questions of this study.

1) Do you think writing in English language is difficult or easy than writing in the mother tongue? Why?

This question was constructed by the researcher to discover the language preference of the supervisors in writing. Although this is a general question, it helped the researcher to discover some points which are related to the causes of writing apprehension.

2) What are the major challenges that you have experienced while supervising a PhD student?

This question was adapted from Gurel (2010) to discover the major challenges that the supervisors encountered in supervising PhD students. The supervisors discussed about the challenges in general when supervising the Malaysian students or international students.

3) Which part in his/her PhD thesis do you think is the most difficult to write? Why?

The researcher constructed this question to discover the supervisors' perspective about the most difficult chapter for his or her supervisees to write.

4) What are the problematic areas your supervisees have when writing his/her PhD thesis? Why?

The researcher constructed this question to discover the problematic areas that the supervisees faced from their supervisor's perspectives.

5) What do you think are the strategies that your supervisee should employ to overcome the challenges he/she encounters when writing the thesis?

This question was adapted from Gurel (2010) to identify the strategies that supervisors would advice their supervisees to use to overcome the apprehension of writing.

6) Describe the interaction between you and your supervisee.

This is a broad question for the supervisors to describe the interaction with the supervisees freely.

### 3.5.2 Document Analysis

The second data collection technique that was used in this study is document analysis. Holsti (1969, p. 14) defines document analysis as "any technique for making inferences by systematically and objectively identifying specified characteristics of messages". Document analysis may involve examining a sample of films, books, newspapers, or television programs and attempting to categorize the messages that are being conveyed to them (Jackson, 1999). The analysis provides the researcher "a mean by which to learn about how subjects or authors of textual materials view their social worlds and how these views fit into the larger frame of

how the social sciences view these issues and interpretations" (Berg, 2009, p.343). This study chose Jordanian PhD students who had already defended their PhD proposals because he needed to analyze their proposal as part of document analysis to triangulate the data.

At the beginning of the research, the researcher asked for the students' consent to allow him to make photocopies of the written feedback sheets. Out of twenty-one proposals, the researcher managed to obtain nine proposals. The students claimed that they had misplaced the proposal sheets. The researcher believes that some students did not want to share them for personal reasons. To prompt the participants to recall and further disclosure of the writing stages they underwent, the researcher asked the students to send him the drafts of their proposals after the interviews. Additionally, the researcher asked them to bring their supervisors' written feedback on their proposals. These pieces of work helped the researcher to gain familiarity with their writing and contextualizing the interviews around their proposals. The proposals were analyzed in terms of the length and feedback (i.e. content vs. form comments). During the interviews, the students were referred to the feedback sheets in cases where they brought them when answering the questions about supervisors' feedback.

The researcher chose document data because Merriam (1998) mentions that document analysis is a suitable data for qualitative case studies because "Documentary can ground an investigation in the context of the problem being investigated" (p.126). Moreover, one important advantage of using document

analysis is stability (Merriam, 1998). Analysis of this data source "lends contextual richness and helps to ground an inquiry in the milieu of the writer. This grounding in real-world issues and day-to-day concerns is ultimately what the naturalistic inquiry is working toward" (Guba and Lincoln, 1981, p. 234).

## 3.6 Interviewer Identity

Abell, Locke, Condor, and Gibson (2006); and Miller & Glassner (1997) discussed about qualitative methods of research which raised the question regarding the way interviewers' identity on the basis of their age, gender, class or race, may impact the interviewees' responses. According to Holstein & Gubrium (1995), interviews generally involve making meaningful work by interviewers and interviewees who hold appropriate identities, share concerns regarding their presentation of themselves, their knowledge and their distinct similarities and differences (Abell et al., 2006). This may be crucial to what interviewees provide to the interview as the interviewee-interviewer interaction adds to and clarifies the categories and activities. The existing qualitative research in literature shows the extent of interviewer's engagement and the extent of his or her experience being displayed. Earlier research show that interviewers are expected to be detached from the interview process to make sure that they do not impact the responses of their respondents (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995). This viewpoint suggests that the interviewer's role is just to guide the interviewee through the provision of questions, silence and short tokens of response and to pick up on follow-up questions from the dialogue cues (Rapley, 2003). Another interviewer's role is to clarify confusion through paraphrasing in cases where the respondents fail to relay the meaning. The interviewers may also

probe for the accuracy of the interviewee's understanding by expounding on questions and answers (Drever, 1995). These particular techniques assisted the researcher of the present study to provide the students with a chance to express their opinions and to introduce topics that were related to their writing experiences. From this perspective, the interviewers' role is primarily to guide the talk through questions, silence and response tokens (e.g. nodding, uh – huh expressions) and to decide which particular part of the answer to follow-up according to the emerging cues from the dialogue (Rapley 2001). Next, interviewers' role is to clear up any ambiguities through paraphrasing when respondents cannot convey the meaning and through probing the accuracy of understanding the questions and answers (Drever, 1995). Indeed, these techniques enabled the researcher of this study to provide his interviewees with opportunities to express their opinions and to raise topics that were relevant to their writing experiences.

On the other hand, interviewers are also advised to make use of tools including self-disclosure to encourage the interviewees to talk about their experiences and opinions in a frank manner (Abell et al., 2006). This reinforces the rapport with the respondents and encourages elaboration (Abell et al., 2006). Moreover, the interviewers have to ensure that the appropriate message has been relayed to the interviewees by sharing their own personal experiences. They may present the distinction between themselves and the interviewees in light of age, education and beliefs. It is imperative that the interviewer avoid expressing his own perceptions and beliefs regarding the research phenomenon and confine the revelation to his PhD

writing experiences as a student; in other words, he has to be detached, unbiased and allow the interviewee to take his time in answering the questions posed.

However, in qualitative research, researchers do not normally utilize the term 'bias' and prefer to view every research as interpretive and call for the researcher's self-reflection of his/her role in the research, how the findings are interpreted, and the researcher's personal and political history shaping his or her interpretation of it (Creswell, 2012). In the present study, the researcher provided a description of a range of methods that could be utilized to conduct qualitative research. According to Merriam (1998), the researcher is the main instrument and as such, it is reliable as the results are consistent and dependable. On the basis of the interactional nature of interviews, it is crucial for the researchers to be in the same platform with the respondents and be privy to insider information (Cohen & Manion, 1989) as this will allow them to have the knowledge to comprehend life experiences and to make real claims to authentic knowledge (Miller & Glassner, 1997). Viewed from this perspective, the researcher had an advantage because of his status as a doctoral degree student, having obtained a Masters Degree in UUM in 2010 whereby he was familiar with the writing practices, assessment criteria, modules and the writing regulations laid down by the University. So the situation primarily placed the researcher in the right position to develop rapport with the participants and to urge them in providing honest and true recounts of their writing experiences.

Moreover, the similarity in age and gender with most of the participants added to the benefit of the research as the answers were provided in a frank and honest manner.

Despite the similarity of gender, the researcher believed that this demographic factor did nothing to influence the interview process. On the whole, the researcher's prior knowledge regarding the topic and his writing experiences seemed to have a positive effect on the data collection process.

**3.7 Pilot Interview**

Pilot interview serves as a practice session for the researcher towards conducting the actual interviews for the study. The main objectives of the pilot interviews can be outlined as follows: (1) To familiarize the researcher with the interviewing technique; (2) To make sure that the questions presented to the participants could be understood by them and (3) To establish the contextual appropriateness of the situations in getting their responses (Creswell, 2008). In addition, the purpose of the pilot study was primarily to explore under realistic conditions the feasibility of interviewing method to collect and analyze data and of testing interview questions. Indeed, piloting gave the researcher insights into how clear the questions were formulated and what kind of responses they might generate. This agrees with Gilliam's (2000) argument that the piloting purpose is concerned mainly with getting the questions right rather than getting the interview right.

In order to achieve the above goals, In June 2011, the researcher conducted pilot interviews with two male Jordanian PhD students at UUM. Since the researcher believes that the participants have the ability to express themselves in the target language, English, the interviews were conducted in English language. The participants understood the questions in English. The data was recorded in order to

help the researcher in transcribing it. The types of answers helped the researcher to have an idea of the themes or categories that might emerge in the actual research.

Pseudonyms were used to refer to the participants such as Khaldon and Yousef. The purpose of using pseudonyms was to make the students feel comfortable while answering the questions. The first interview was conducted with Khaldon who is a PhD student at the College of Arts and Sciences. He admitted experiencing difficulties when writing in English. These difficulties were related to grammar, spelling and academic writing. He classified his apprehension of writing as a three out of five. He experienced apprehension in writing whenever he had to submit his work to his supervisor. He believed that his supervisor was better than him in grammar, academic writing, and an expert in the subject that he was writing on. He experienced apprehension of writing whenever he shared his writing with other friends. He gave the following reasons for feeling apprehensive when writing in English. First, he was afraid of the defence and VIVA sessions because he was always thinking about the examiners who would come to evaluate his work. Second, he was apprehensive in writing so he would rewrite his work many times until he was satisfied with his work. Third, he did not have much vocabulary to help him write effectively. Fourth, he is a non native speaker of English, and that's why he is afraid to write in English. Fifth, he was afraid of his supervisor's experience. Lastly, he was afraid of someone evaluating his work. Moreover, Kahldon mentioned some strategies that he used when he experienced apprehension in writing such as changing his mood by doing some activities like hanging out with friends, going out of his room for a while, changing his study place, and doing Sweden sports exercise.

He tried to write more as an extra work until he could improve his writing and he gave his work to his best friends to correct his mistakes.

The next participant interviewed was Yousef, a PhD student at the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS). He admitted experiencing difficulties when writing in English. These difficulties were related to his inability to express his ideas in short sentences; his failure in practicing English well with words that he needed; his inability to use the right word at the right place and his problem with writing long sentences and less organization. He considered his apprehension in writing as moderate level. It also depended on the subjects that he was writing about. He was apprehensive when writing on a difficult subject that needed specific words. He mentioned a few reasons for feeling apprehensive while writing in English. First, he felt that his ideas were not connected to give a full meaning of what he was writing about. Second, he was always confused about the vocabulary because sometimes he couldn't use the right word at the right place. Third, he couldn't differentiate between different words with the same meaning; and he was not confident in his writing. Lastly, he is a non native speaker of English, and that's why he could not get the full meaning of similar words when writing in English. Moreover, Yousef mentioned some strategies that he used when feeling apprehensive in writing such as getting advice from someone who was an expert on that topic. He tried to correct his own writing and compare it with other writings. He also used software programs to improve his writing. At the end of the interview, Yousef said:

> I sometimes stop breathing when I am writing because I feel inside myself that I am not strong enough to express this idea or to explain it more to give it as a briefly as it must be done.

From the pilot interview, the researcher found that the participants understood questions number one, two, five and six clearly. The participants answered the questions in English language. The researcher made two slight changes to the situation to be explored to the main study. For question three, part two, it clearly indicated that the respondents were hesitant to classify themselves into the levels of apprehension in writing. The first participant classified himself as 3 out of 5 and the second respondent classified himself at a moderate level or it depended on the subjects that he was writing about. So, for the actual study, the researcher decided to ask the participants to classify themselves into three levels "High, moderate, or low" levels of writing apprehension only. In addition, question number four, the researcher decided to use the word situation only because the participants could not differentiate between circumstances and situations. These changes had been made to make the questions better understood by the participants. The pilot study also provided feedback which helped the researcher to revise the interview schedule and to develop the required interviewing skills. Additionally, the researcher transcribed the excerpt from an interview and tried to discern the major themes, gaining some insights into how to manage and interpret data. Taken as a whole, the piloting familiarized the researcher with strategies of inquiry that were used later during the main research.

**3.8 Trustworthiness of the Study**

The entire procedure of data collection and analysis in a qualitative research call for the researcher's making sure that the study's findings are as accurate as possible. According to Healy and Perry (2000), the study quality of each paradigm should be

viewed on its own terms. For instance, the terms reliability and validity are, of no doubt, of importance to the quality of the quantitative paradigms; however, in its qualitative counterpart, other terms like credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability are required when designing a study, analysis of findings and gauging the quality of study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; and Patton, 2002). Credibility is the confidence in the findings authenticity while transferability is the findings applicability in other contexts and dependability is the consistency of findings in a recurring manner. Finally, confirmability is the extent of neutrality or the extent of participant's contribution to the findings and its freedom from researcher's bias, motivation and interest (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

A range of strategies were used to strengthen the validity and reliability of this study. Firstly, the researcher tried to design the interview schedule to meet the research objectives and questions. Secondly, careful attention was devoted to building up rapport and a comfortable atmosphere. This situation encourages participants to answer truthfully and to raise issues that were important to them. Overall, the researcher believes that all the interviewees felt comfortable enough to talk and disclose their writing experiences.

To establish trustworthiness of this qualitative case study, multiple methods had been used such as interviews were conducted with the supervises/students, interviews were conducted with the supervisors and documents were analyzed to triangulate the data. Hence, the researcher of the present study established the trustworthiness of the

present study through varying methods including data triangulation, member-checking, peer-review and audit trial.

1. Triangulation.

The first step to triangulate the data was to triangulate the primary data (taken from interviews with the Jordanian PhD students) with their secondary data (taken from interviews with the supervisors). Additionally, data triangulation is considered to be the collection of multiple data sources under a single method; for instance, multiple interviews resulting in multiple data sources are gathered through a single method of interviewing participants. In the present study, the researcher interviewed 21 Jordanian PhD students in UUM, as well as 9 supervisors who supervised 11 of them in order to triangulate the main data from the students' perspectives. The themes that emerged were from the students' perspective. At the same time, the researcher interviewed the supervisors to seek the challenges that they were facing with their supervisees. The researcher compared the students' data with the supervisors' data.

The second step to triangulate the data was to triangulate the primary data (taken from interviews with the Jordanian PhD students) with the secondary data (PhD proposals). In the present study, the researcher studied the phenomenon of writing apprehension through two methods namely interviewing and document analysis. The respondents comprised of Jordanian PhD students and their supervisors and hence, the researcher could verify the veracity of information from different data sources. Every data source might highlight certain aspects of writing apprehension coming from varying perspectives. This particular method was employed to make sure that

the respondents' accounts were rich, robust, comprehensive and well-developed. Through data triangulation, the researcher developed a more accurate understanding of the topic as compared to using a single data source. The researcher conducted an examination of every information source and provided justifications on a theme based on the evidence given therein ensuring that the study was accurate as the information was gathered from multiple sources of information, individuals, and processes. As such, the researcher needed to create a report that could be characterized as accurate and credible (Creswell, 2012). For the present study, the researcher analyzed the supervisors' comments on the proposals. Then, the researcher tried to develop the themes that emerged based on what the students mentioned in the interview session. The researcher found evidences from the supervisors' written comments on the proposals which were mentioned by the students. Nevertheless, the researcher also found evidences from the proposal which were not mentioned by the participants.

2. Member Checking

Member checking is defined as "a process in which the researcher asks one or more participants in the study to check the accuracy of the account" (Creswell, 2008, p. 267). This process calls for taking the findings back to the participants and requesting for their verification. Along with testing the findings' accuracy and validity, this process also evidences their credibility and reliability. Lincoln and Guba (1985) viewed member checking as the most important method to establish the credibility of findings although it has its controversies; for instance, the researcher may have done everything to fulfil his role as a main instrument but bias influence

upon the data could still occur (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Additionally, error in data collection may arise owing to the researcher's lack of understanding or misunderstanding of the real situation and hence, to decrease this possibility, the researcher of the present study approached the participants to review the data gathered. Member checking was carried out in the research in three phases. First, the transcript was validated, then the researcher's understanding and interpretation were verified and finally, varying categories and themes formed were verified. The researcher allowed the participants to check and go over the findings to verify their completeness and realism, to check the accuracy of the themes, and to check the fairness of the representation of interpretations. The participants were in agreement with the categories.

3. Peer-review

In the context of the present study, peer review was conducted in two stages – formal discussions with the supervisor followed by informal discussions with fellow students of the same status. The first phase involved the researcher's discussion with the supervisors throughout the study with a special focus on the data analysis process with the aim to obtain a clear view of the analysis process and the formation of the categories. At the same time, trustworthiness was established through the supervisor's evaluation of the interview questions. The obtained feedback was used to make further improvements to the interview questions. Trustworthiness was further reinforced by the researcher's ongoing and direct involvement with the students with the supervisor of the study, Dr. Noor Hashima Bt. Abd Aziz acting as the auditor.

The second phase involved informal discussions with fellow students particularly those dealing with the qualitative approach. The researcher had discussions with two PhD students in Applied Linguistics program. Both of them did their VIVA in 2013. This phase aimed to seek the opinion of the students and their participation in reviewing the tentative categories and themes developed by the researcher to ensure that they were more acceptable following critical evaluations. This step opens the opportunity for question and answer and discussions relating to the study. For instance, following the presentation of the themes, discussions were ensued between the supervisor and the researcher's fellow students regarding the formation of themes and the researcher provided explanations as to the context or phenomenon that occurred in light of the interview data.

4. Audit trail

Audit trail is also known as data auditing process which assists in searching and keeping abreast of events that takes place in the field. The final phase involved the transparent description of the research steps from the initial step, to the development and report of findings. These refer to records drawn throughout the investigation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The researcher of this study described thoroughly the research that is how he collected the data, how he categorized the data, and how he made the decisions. This action provided the researcher a chance to keep abreast of his thinking, prediction, and formulation of intuitive ideas from the onset (Creswell, 2012). In the context of the present research, this phase was carried out through many ways including; jotting down daily activities of the process from data collection until the findings, and providing descriptions of the collection of data, its

categorization and how decision was made. This phase provides the chance to reach

valid and reliable findings and indirectly improves data validity.

## 3.9 Data Analysis

In this study, the data mainly came from the verbatim transcription of the interview

data with the participants  (supervisees). The researcher triangulated this data with

the verbatim transcription of the interview data with the supervisors and the analysis

of the PhD document. Verbatim statements made by the students served as evidence

of the writing apprehension. Each participant's perspective on the issue of writing

apprehension was analyzed. The analysis of the data began after the first interview.

A technique called constant comparative method proposed by Lincoln and Guba was

used to analyze the data. The researcher used two strategies for organizing and

analyzing the data which were hand analysis strategy, and basic computer program

(office word process). The strategies seemed to work out well.

## 3.9.1 Hand Analysis Strategy

According to Creswell (2012), the hand analysis strategy of qualitative data means

that data is read, marked by hand, and divided into parts. The reasons that the

researcher chose hand analysis rather than computer software analysis were the

researcher was not comfortable using computers even though the researcher attended

two workshops in UUM to analyze the data using computer software program called

NVIVO and also the researcher had many difficulties to learn it. The researcher

found that the analysis involved only a small database (e.g., fewer than 500 pages of

transcripts or field notes) and could easily keep track of files and locate text

passages. In addition, the researcher wanted to be close to the data and have hands-on feel for it without the intrusion of a machine. In this study, the hand analysis strategy was utilized because it involved only a small database which could easily be analyzed. Altogether, the interviews were conducted with 21 Jordanian PhD students in UUM and 9 supervisors who supervised 11 PhD students. Before the data was analyzed, the researcher transcribed all the interviews. The process of transcribing allows the researcher to become acquainted with the data (Reissman, 1993). The researcher followed a few steps in the hand analysis strategy when doing the verbatim transcription of the interview. Firstly, the researcher listened to each tape once by referring to the interview guide questions. Next, while listening attentively to each tape, the researcher wrote on pieces of paper the exact words used by the participants in expressing their views. Rewinding of the tapes had to be done many times to get the exact words. Lastly, the researcher had to rewind each tape again to check the hand-written analysis.

### 3.9.2 Office Word Process

When the researcher was satisfied with the verbatim transcriptions, the researcher transferred the written record by typing them on a computer using the Word Processor and printed them. In addition, the researcher created Microsoft Word files for the interviews. All files were protected by setting a password. All files were saved in the researcher's portable computer for which he was the only person who had access to it. The researcher used the meaning of analysis context as the unit of analysis for coding and also looked for description. This means that the data was not coded sentence by sentence or paragraph by paragraph, but coded for meaning.

For the thematic analysis, the researcher followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) step-by-step guidelines. Braun and Clarke's (2006) used the word guidelines to highlight the flexibility of qualitative analytic method. These guidelines are (1) Familiarizing yourself with your data, (2) Generating initial codes, (3) The researcher read throughout each transcript to immerse in the data, (4) Reviewing themes, (5) Defining and naming themes, and (6) Producing the report.

### 3.9.3 Coding

The further process of analyzing text in qualitative research begins when you code the data. Coding is the process of segmenting and labeling text to form descriptions and broad themes in the data. Although there are no set guidelines for coding data, some general procedures exist (Creswell, 2012). Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest several tools for coding data. One technique entails a quick read through the document and a broad-brush coding of wide topics, such as whole paragraphs or speaking turns or responses to questions. To start coding, the researcher chose two interview transcripts: one transcript which was rich in details and the second which provided less detailed responses. Additionally, the transcripts offered rich themes to the causes of writing apprehension, effects of writing apprehension and strategies to overcome writing apprehension. The first reading was quick, providing an overview of the data and specific themes to be watched for in the other transcripts. This process of coding led to the formulation of initial themes as eight main categories for the first research question as followed: (1) Lack of adequate knowledge in English structure, (2) Composing behavior, (3) Lack of writing skills, (4) Negative previous writing experience from the past, (5) Perception of writing, (6) Issues of writing PhD

thesis, (7) Issues of writing subjects, (8) Issue of time restriction. In relation to the second research question emerged from the present study 4 themes as followed: (1) Personal effects, (2) Social effects, (3) Academic effects. 12 strategies emerged in relation to the last question. These are: Preparation, Using technology programs, Peer seeking, Avoidance, Memorizing, Watching movies, Listening to the news, Talking with foreigners, Supervisors experience, Do-proof reading, positive thinking "self-motivation", and Relaxation.

Next, Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest that once the relevant concepts become clearer, researchers can work reflectively through transcripts reading line-by-line to develop more discrete coding categories. In the present study, in a second reading the initial themes were applied to the other two transcripts. The researcher read line-by-line each participant's response, each word combination, sentence and/or paragraph to categories them into an existing categorize or into a new assigned category.

Next, the researcher proceeded with coding of another fifteen transcripts. At the end of this stage, the researcher reached the data saturation at the 19 interviews. The researcher analyzed the number of recurrences of each category. The researcher located categories that had similar labels and/or contents, addressing the same themes. The researcher also submitted the list of categories and subcategories alongside a piece of interview transcript to his supervisor. The last two interviews were analyzed to saturate the data of this study.

The research started with a list of categories that evolved as the researcher made more decisions about which bits of data could or could not be assigned to the existing categories. Categories that emerged during data analysis seemed to be better grounded empirically and revealed that the researcher was open to what the site had to say, rather than determined to force fit the data into pre-existing codes (Miles & Huberman 1994).

## 3.10 Ethical and Legal Considerations

Ethical and legal considerations have to be considered when conducting a study which relates to human participants. In relation to the objectives and goals of the present study, several ethical issues were considered during the research process (Creswell, 2009). Wiersma (2000) claims that when conducting a study relating to human, some issues may have to be considered. First, the issue of gaining access to a site through "gatekeeper". The researcher of this study did not face difficulties to select a site, which is Universiti Utara Malaysia because the researcher is a student at the same university. In addition, the researcher obtained permission from the Postgraduate Deans of the three Colleges (UUM CAS, UUM COB, and UUM COLGIS) to collect the data. The interviews were tape-recorded because the researcher obtained permission to do so. If a tape recorder is used, all the information can be recorded, including important information like exploring the causes of writing apprehension, which the interviewer could not write down without stopping the flow of conversation and breaking his rapport with the participants. The use of tape recorder had little or no effect on the response rate. The researcher had no problem to get a room in UUM library to conduct the interview because interview sessions need

a quiet place. For interviewing, the researcher used a recorder which had an automatic stop at the end of the tape; otherwise some of the interviews might be missed.

Secondly, the researcher made an agreement of confidentiality with the participants by asking them to fill in a letter of consent before starting the interview and explained the purpose of the study to the participants. Thirdly, the PhD students were informed that their ethnicity would not be discussed in the study to avoid biases. Fourthly, the researcher used numbers to refer to the participants' names and ensured them that participating in this study would have no negative implications on them.

### 3.11 Summary

The researcher has explained the research design of this study which is qualitative case study. The researcher provides reasons for using qualitative research design. Then, the researcher explains about the participants of this study who are Jordanian postgraduate students in Universiti Utara Malaysia. The researcher decides on the criteria for selection of participants. Next, the researcher also explains the data collection techniques which helped the researcher to understand the phenomenon of writing apprehension. The researcher explains about using semi-structured interview and document analysis to collect the data. Next, the researcher discusses the benefits of doing a pilot study before collecting the real data. Hand analysis is explained as a method to analyze the interview data. Trustworthiness has also been discussed. Finally, the researcher discusses the ethical and legal considerations of this research.

# CHAPTER FOUR
# FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

## 4.1 Introduction

The aim of this research was to describe writing apprehension phenomenon from the Jordanian EFL students' perspective when writing their PhD thesis in English. This chapter provides the findings in relation to the research questions posed in the study. The research questions are: (1) What are the causes of the Jordanian Ph.D. students' writing apprehension when writing their Ph.D. thesis? (2) What are the effects of the Jordanian Ph.D. students' writing apprehension when writing their Ph.D. thesis? (3) What are the strategies that the Jordanian Ph.D. students' employed to reduce writing apprehension when writing their Ph.D. thesis?

In this study, data were obtained through interviews and documents analysis. The researcher stopped interviewing the participants at the 21 participant although data saturation had been reached at the nineteenth participant. This was done to make sure that the data had reached the point of saturation and that no more new information could be obtained from the participants. Strauss and Corbin (1990) point out that collecting additional data does not make much difference then. The researcher also interviewed 9 supervisors who were supervising 11 of the students in order to triangulate with the students' data. In terms of documents, the researcher managed to analyze only 9 PhD proposals in order to triangulate with the main data from the students' interviews. Data analysis was done through the constant comparative method proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985).

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The transcribed interviews with the students and the supervisors are presented using their own words i.e. verbatim transcription. Narrative form and tables are also used to display information as well as to dramatize the themes or particular aspects of each research question of this study (Wolcott, 1994). The themes which emerged from this study were mainly derived from the Jordanian PhD students' perspective. In this study, the findings of each sub-themes are presented first followed by the discussion on them. The causes of writing apprehension are presented in the next section.

## 4.2 Causes of writing apprehension

The first research question for this study was: What are the causes of writing apprehension among the Jordanian PhD students when writing their PhD thesis in Universiti Utara Malaysia? It was found that the students associated apprehension in writing their PhD thesis with the lack of knowledge in English structure, negative attitude toward writing, negative writing experience in the past, and inadequate knowledge in academic writing (See Table 4.1).

## 4.2.1 Theme 1: Lack of knowledge in English structure

The first theme which emerged from this study was lack of knowledge in English structure, which is divided into three sub-themes: problems with coherence, problems in mechanism of writing and limited vocabulary. (Please refer to Table 4.1) Majority of the participants (20 out of 21 participants) in this study associated writing apprehension with the lack of knowledge in English structure. The researcher used occurrences in Table 4.1 to show how many times the sub-themes were

mentioned by the students. For example, the first sub-theme was mentioned 20 times by the 21 participants. The second sub-theme was mentioned 18 times. The last sub-theme was mentioned 14 times by the participants.

*Table 4.1. Causes of Writing Apprehension (Theme 1)*

| Theme 1 | Sub-theme | Occurrences |
|---|---|---|
| Lack of knowledge in English structure | *Problems with coherence (Writing flow, conjunction words, unrelated sentences, repetition, and sentence length). | 20 |
| | *Problems in mechanism of writing (Grammar, reporting verbs, punctuation, spelling, paraphrasing, and capital letters). | 18 |
| | *Limited vocabulary | 14 |

### 4.2.1.1 Problems with Coherence

The first sub-theme of the major theme which emerged in this study was problems with coherence which was related to problems with the writing flow, less use of conjunction words, writing long sentences, and repetition of ideas and sentences. Most of the participants (20 out of 21) admitted that they faced problems with coherence. Coherence is defined as "the organization of discourse with all elements present and fitting together logically" (Hinkel, 2004, p. 33).

## Writing Flow

Most of the Jordanian PhD students interviewed claimed that they faced problem with the writing flow such as how to connect between sentences and paragraphs, and organization of ideas. For example, participant 11 who is majoring in Applied Linguistics programme expressed his problem of linking the paragraphs. He said:

> It was a big challenge for me to link the paragraphs, for example, when I finish one paragraph I do not know how to make a connection with the next one. How should I start the next paragraph (Participant, 11).

Similarly, participant 3 mentioned that he had difficulties to link the paragraphs with each other. He did not know how to make the proposal easier to be understood by readers. He said:

> My supervisor keeps returning all my works and she keeps asking me to make the flow of the proposal simpler and easier to read for the audience (Participant, 3)

Other participants in this study i.e participants 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12, 17, 19, 20 and 21 who were majoring in different programmes such as Marketing, Accounting, Human Resource Management, Management, Information Technology, Information Communication Technology, Tourism and Hospitality Management, Applied Linguistics, and Psychology also expressed their problems in the flow of writing between the paragraphs and the sentences. For example, Participant 5 who is majoring in Information Communication Technology expressed his problem by saying that his supervisor was always asking him to link the sentences and the paragraphs. He said:

> Most of the comments were saying that there is no flow or link between the paragraphs and the sentences. But I do not know how to make it (Participant, 5).

Participant 7, majoring in Information Technology programme talked about the same problem that he was facing which is making the sentences linking with each other. He said:

> I have faced problem with linking between sentences and the paragraphs because I rarely write in English before I come to Malaysia (Participant, 7)

Participant 19 said that he faced difficulties to arrange his ideas and paragraphs. He said:

> I faced problem while arranging the ideas and paragraphs. So, my comments were to rearrange my ideas many times. Sometimes, I feel anxiety because such kind of comments (Participant, 19).

## Conjunction words

Another reason mentioned by the participants in relation to problems with coherence was the use of conjunction words or linking words. Participant 10 expressed his problem of using limited number of conjunction words. He used the same conjunction words many times. Participant 10 said:

> I have less using of connecting words such as in addition, furthermore. For example, I use "and" many times at the same paragraph because I don't know other words and I don't when I can use other words. So, the paragraph will be weak (Participant, 10).

Participant 18 expressed the following:

> I have enough connection words in my mind, but the problem is how to use them. I use the linking words in wrong situations such as however, therefore (Participant, 18).

Similarly, participant 14 said:

> Another challenge is using the linking words. Sometimes there is a
> wrong using of the linking words or there is a limited linking words
> that I have used by repeating the same linking words several times
> which make my writing looks like poor English such as furthermore,
> moreover, in addition, but (Participant, 14)
> .

The researcher found that those majoring in Applied Linguistics programme had the
same problem with other majors. For example, participant 11 said:

> Because I have a problem of using the connection words sometimes
> such as moreover, however, in addition, nevertheless, nonetheless.
> These connection words sometimes I use them in the wrong place. But
> I try to not be wrong with these connection words by reading the
> sentence again and try to use it on the right place (Participant, 11)

Other participants i.e. participants 1, 3, 5, 7, 16, and 19 who were majoring in
different programmes such as Marketing, Human Resource Management,
Information Communication Technology, Information Technology, Psychology, and
Tourism and Hospitality Management expressed the same problem. All of them
mentioned that they used very few conjunction words in the paragraphs. This
problem made them feel worry about their writing and sometimes it affected their
writing.

## **Repetition**

Repetition was also another reason mentioned by the participants in relation to
problems with coherence. The students said that sometimes they repeated a few
times what they had already written. 14 out of 21 Participants (66%) i.e. participants
2, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 18, 20 and 21 who were from various majors such
as Accounting, Management Technology, Information Communication Technology,

Human Resource Management, Management, Tourism and Hospitality Management,

Applied Linguistics, Information Technology, and Psychology, claimed that they had

some problems to express their ideas such as missing some ideas to write, repeating

the same idea many times especially in the literature review section, and combining

ideas and summarizing some ideas. For example, participant 18 commented:

> I repeat the ideas many times. Such as giving the objective of the study everywhere in the thesis by saying that "The study focuses on….(Participant, 18)

Participant 10 expressed his problem by saying:

> Normally, it takes me more than 10 hours daily to study until I can express my ideas on paper because the ideas are not clear because I use some words which are not related at that situation. So, I feel I can't express my ideas on paper. At the same time, I mix more than one idea in one sentence. So, the reader will be confused of what I want to say.

However, participant 16 claimed that the problem was writing general ideas instead

of being more specific in order to produce a good piece of writing. He commented:

> Once I began writing my thesis, sometimes I just write general idea about thesis. So, most of my supervisor comments were related to just give the direct idea. At the same time, I face difficulties to summarize the ideas. So, I have to read and read and read in order to know how to summarize this idea (Participant, 16)

Those majoring in Applied Linguistics programme also had the same problem with

other participants about repeating ideas. Both participants 11 and 21 expressed their

problem of repeating of ideas, disorganized ideas, and combining and summarizing

ideas. For example, participant 21 said:

> Sometimes, I write sentences without meaning. When my supervisor asked me what does you mean by this? I can't reply because even me I don't know how I have written this kind of ideas which are not related.

Another problem that I always face is combining between the sentences (Participant, 11).

## Sentence Length

Difficulties in writing short and precise sentences and paragraphs were one of the problems that students faced when writing their PhD thesis. Participants 2, 3, 4, 6, 14, 15, 18, and 20 claimed that they faced problems to write sentences when writing their thesis and this increased their apprehension level. 8 out of the 21 participants commented that this problem highlighted by their supervisors. Participant 15 declared that writing short sentences was the biggest challenge for him. He said:

> You need the foundation of English with small sentences give full meaning which is very difficult for me and sometimes I give large sentences and at the end I did not give the idea that I want to write. So, I try to do it again and again which make it not easy for me (Participant, 11).

Participant 14 also knew that writing long sentences and paragraphs is one of the academic writing skills but he did not know how to write short sentences. He commented:

> One of the major challenges when writing in English especially writing PhD thesis is writing short sentences and short paragraphs that mainly contain only one idea where sometimes I have written paragraphs extend for one page which is I considered poor English and the challenge was to separate this paragraphs to two or more paragraphs (Participant, 14).

Participant 6 felt that his writing was not sophisticated because of the length of his writing. He had always written long paragraphs. He said:

> I feel frustrated when I got the comment because I realized that I wrong very long paragraph. Some paragraphs are extended for more than a page, which I know it's my weakness part (Participant, 6).

The second step to triangulate the main data was done by analyzing the students'

document i.e. proposal. The researcher triangulated the first sub-theme (problems

with coherence) which emerged from the main theme lack of knowledge of English

structure with the proposal document. 5 documents out of 9 documents showed

problem with coherence. Analysis of the documents shows the problems with

coherence such as problems of using conjunction words, length sentences, and way

to express ideas, to rewrite the same ideas in the context, in organizing the

paragraphs, in writing unclear paragraphs or incomplete sentences, paragraphs or

sentences which need more explanation. 5 out of 9 documents contained this

problem. Participants 3, 5, 14, 17 and 20 also admitted that they were facing problem

with coherence when they were writing their PhD proposals.


Writing flow

The researcher found in document number 6, whereby participant 17 wrote some

paragraphs in some awkward manner to the reader which led to some confusion in

his writing. His supervisor commented:

> This research attempts to contribute and help government to improve
> and implement e-government initiative more effectively by the
> business communities. This research hopes to narrow the knowledge
> gap that exists due to the scarcity of studies in the field of e-
> government adoption and implementation prerequisites of e-
> government success (Participant 17, Document 6).

Another example was obtained from the same participant in relation to incomplete

sentences. He wrote incomplete ideas as such:

> The previous study by Ramdani et al., (2009) obtained average alpha
> reliability of 0.95 for the relative advantage and 0.92 for the
> compatibility (Participant 17, Document 6).

The PhD document of participant 3 showed that he repeated his ideas many times in

a sentence such as:

> As stated earlier in chapter 1, the main objective of the present study is to examine the relationship between organization variables namely, human resources practices, and leadership style on cyber-deviance, and the effect of mediating variable (organizational commitment) on human resources practices, leadership style, and cyber-deviance (Participant 3, Document 1).

Similarly, another example:

> This study is conducted at three telecommunication companies in Jordan, which is contain three companies, whereby all located at the capital city at Amman (Participant 3, Document 1).

Likewise, some other documents showed that the students did not provide enough

details in their writing. The researcher found in document 9 whereby participant 20

did not provide enough details about his topic. He wrote:

> The multichannel integration process in which value-adding activities are created with customers based on the outputs from the strategy development process and the value creation process (Payne & Frow, 2005). This process is neglected from the categorization of Plakoyiannaki & Saren, 2006. (Explain more what multichanel integration process is…); (Participant 20, Document 9).

Furthermore, some students were facing problem in summarizing their write-up. The

following is the comment from the supervisor of participant 17:

> The summary section is too short and inappropriate. It should be enhanced to include the major issues of the chapter and their outcomes to the study. Chapter two discussed literature related to e-government IS adoption. It highlighted some of issues that are linked to characteristics of e-government adoption, factors that drive its adoption and the impacts on businesses performance. The literatures provide the foundation for the development of the research framework for this study which is discussed in the next chapter (Participant 17, Document 6).

Conjunction words

The proposal documents showed that the participants were struggling to use conjunction words, and they had limited number of conjunction words or they did not use them at all. For example, participant 3 used the conjunction *and* in the wrong place. He wrote:

> The collection and of data will be carried out as follows (Participant 3, Document 1).

Another example, participant 16 who was majoring in Psychology programme used *and* many times in the same paragraph. He wrote:

> Mayer et al., (2004) redefines emotional intelligence as the ability to perceive emotions accurately, and to access and generate emotions, appraise and express feelings, to assist thought, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotions and intellectual growth (Participant, 16, Document 5).

For example, Participant 3 started a new paragraph using *because* to link with the previous paragraph:

> Because behaviors must be purposefully toward the organization goals, actual behaviors are expected to help achieve organizational effectiveness and efficiencies (Participant, 3, Document 1).

Linking sentences

Another example showed that the students did not know how to link the sentences.

Participant 8 wrote:

> Robinson and Bennett, (1995) refer to organizational deviance as grouping of behaviors between the individual and the organization that involves such things as theft, sabotage, lateness, or putting little effort into work. Previous scholars have identified cyber-deviance under the organizational deviancy category (Lim, 2002 and 2005), (Participant, 8, Document 8).

Other students wrote incomplete information. The supervisor of participant 20 who was majoring in Information Technology was unsatisfied with his writing as there was lack of explanation, so he commented: Explain more what multichannel integration process is…. He wrote:

> The multichannel integration process in which value-adding activities are created with customers based on the outputs from the strategy development process and the value creation process (Payne & Frow, 2005). This process is neglected from the categorization of Plakoyiannaki & Saren, 2006. (Supervisor 9, Participant 20).

In the present study, majority of the PhD Jordanian students mentioned problems in coherence as the major cause of writing apprehension when writing their PhD thesis. The problems with coherence were related to writing flow, conjunction words, unrelated sentences, repetition, and sentence length. These findings are similar to the findings by (Al Fadda, 2012; Daud et al., 2005; Daly, 1978a; Khan, 2011; Latif 2007; Mo, 2012; Salem, 2007).

**4.2.1.2 Problems in Mechanism of Writing**

The second sub-theme which emerged from the main theme lack of knowledge in English structure was problems in mechanism of writing such as Grammar, reporting verbs, punctuation, spelling, paraphrasing and capital letters. Out of the 21 participants in this study, 18 of them (2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 17, 18, 19 20, and 21) mentioned that they were weak in writing academically.

## Grammatical Mistakes

Participant 2, for example, was sure that he had made grammatical mistakes in his proposal but he could not find them easily by himself. He said:

> I have faced a lot of grammatical mistakes such as using simple present or simple continuous in some cases, maybe because I am not native speaker of English language  (Participant, 2).

Some other participants expressed their mistakes by claiming that they did not know when they could use the correct tense whether present, past or future. Participant 6 commented:

> I faced challenges of how and when should use the tense such as simple present, present perfect, simple past and past perfect. My supervisor always corrected my grammar and saying that this is my weakness in writing the PhD proposal (Participant, 6).

Participant 8 had less confidence in using grammar in writing. He believed that he was weak in grammar since he was a child. He could not produce a good paper. He remarked:

> I know myself; I am very weak in grammar since I was in the school. My supervisor always complains because of my silly grammar mistakes such as subject verb agreement (Participant, 8).

Similarly, participant 10 had less confidence in his writing because he rarely wrote in English during bachelor and master levels. He said:

> Sometimes I don't want to show my work to my supervisor because I am sure that I have a lot of grammar mistakes which may affect my writing. That's because I rarely write in English before I came to Malaysia (Participant, 10).

Participant 4 expressed his weakness in grammar due to his educational background. He obtained his bachelor and master degrees from Ukraine where the medium of instruction was Russian language. He said:

> My writing was something like beginners of the language because I have studied my bachelor and master degrees from Ukraine. They teach me in their own language. So, I really have a lot of grammar mistakes (Participant, 4).

The researcher was surprised when participant 11 claimed that he also made grammatical mistakes although he was majoring in applied linguistics programme. He said:

> The difficulties come from the grammar. Sometimes, I don't use the grammatical rules by the right way. I remember, I rewrite the research questions many times because of the grammatical mistakes such as change the research question from what to how(Participant, 11).

Participant 7 claimed that he was not too bad in grammar but he had problem in choosing the correct reporting verbs. He said:

> I have limited number of reporting verbs that I used such as claim or state and sometimes I used them in a wrong place. By repeating these two words, my writing will look like a weak paper (Participant, 7).

## **Punctuation**

Punctuation is a very important issue in academic writing because it is a way to separate sentences and clauses and to make the meaning of sentences clearer. Participant 13 expressed his problem of using the punctuation. He rarely used them in the paragraphs although he wrote a very long one.  He did not know when he could use the punctuation marks. He said:

Actually, I feel I am sometimes good in writing. I don't have a lot of grammar mistakes but at that time, I don't know where I want to put the punctuations, where to put the full stop and comma (Participant, 13).

## Spelling

Participant 14 claimed that he was good in grammar a long time ago, but he had problem in spelling the words. He was confused with the meaning of words. He said:

One of the challenges that I have faced is that spelling of certain words in English like receive, two and achieve. For example, I write two with a different spelling without observe like tow which can change the meaning of the sentence (Participant, 14).

## Paraphrasing

Nine students admitted that they did not know how to paraphrase or rewrite their work because of the difficulties that they were facing such as writing academically, using the correct grammar, and using the correct words because of limited vocabulary. All these led to an increase in their apprehension of writing their PhD proposal in English. Participant 2 said:

When I start my PhD, it was too hard for me to write in English language. So, I was taken other works from different papers "copy-paste". But later on I realized that the percentage of the copy and paste in my work is 40%. So, I start to develop my English language to minimize the high percentage until it reached to 2% only (Participant, 2).

Although participant 2 resorted to copy-paste in the beginning he found that his work was unsatisfactory. The plagiarism rate was high. Even those who were majoring in Applied Linguistics programme stated that they were facing problem in rewriting

and paraphrasing their work because the work required to be written academically with good quality. Participant 11 said:

> Even I am majoring in English language but sometimes I face difficulties to paraphrase some paragraphs because the way that author write is with high quality in English. So, I have to take longer time to paraphrase it (Participant, 11)

In the present study, majority of the Jordanian students mentioned mechanism of writing as another major cause of writing apprehension which increased their level of apprehension when writing their PhD thesis. The problem in mechanism of writing was related to grammar, reporting verbs, punctuation, spelling, paraphrasing, and capital letters. The findings of this sub-theme are also similar to the findings by (Al Fadda, 2012; Daud et al., 2005; Daly, 1978a; Khan, 2011; Latif 2007; Mo, 2012; Salem, 2007). They mentioned that such mistakes made by the students might increase their writing apprehension. For example, Al Fadda (2012) suggests that students should be aware of their grammatical mistakes when they are writing.

The next discussion on the sub-theme are verbatim transcriptions taken from the supervisors' interview data and PhD document analysis which the researcher used to triangulate with the students' interview data. The researcher triangulated the students' interviews with the supervisors' interviews and analyzing documents. The sub-theme which emerged from this study was problems in mechanism of writing supported by the supervisors' perspectives.

<u>Long Paragraph without punctuation</u>

Supervisor 4 who supervised participant 11, shared his experience supervising Jordanian students. He believed that the way Middle East students write was different from the Asian students. Middle East students sometimes write long paragraphs without using any punctuation all. He said:

> It's not the culture but I believe especially in writing. I think this is common, you will feel research done by other scholars. You notice that the way the Middle East write is different from the way the Malaysian or Asian countries such as Thailand or Indonesian writes especially there is no punctuation. Even at the PhD level; I have other PhD students who refused to have a full stop in their writing. And then I said, so where is in the academic convention. You must have punctuation, so that the readers will be able to see clearly what you are thinking and what you are expressing (Supervisor 4, Participant 11).

<u>Grammatical Mistakes</u>

Supervisor 6 who supervised participant 13 agreed with the participant about the problem that he faced when writing his PhD proposals especially in grammar. He said:

> This student face problem with grammar because he is not native of English and education background (Supervisor 6, Participant 13).

Supervisor 1 who supervised participants 3 and 8 believed that students must submit a good piece of paper to the supervisor without a lot of grammatical mistakes. She explained that a supervisor's job is not to correct students' work as what students think. She said:

> Probably many students assume that it is the job of the supervisor to check the grammar etc. of their work. If this is the assumption they have, this is a huge mistake. Supervisors do not do this; it is the student's responsibility to make sure that the work is in a good form when submitting it to their supervisor. Sometimes I think students are

also to blame if there is delay in their progress as they do not show the
right effort to their supervisors (Supervisor 1, Participants 3 & 8).

## Lack of Reporting Verbs

Supervisor 4 who was supervised participant 11 supported the sub-theme of this
study by saying that the students rarely used many reporting verbs to denote their
work. The students just knew a few words which they always used, for example, 100
times in the context. He said:

> Some of the students also have problems in using reporting verbs. For
> examples, they always write the author says, the author notes, where
> there are many ways of using reporting verbs and that is also another
> problem (Supervisor 4, Participant 11).

The researcher analyzed 9 documents to triangulate the main data from the students'
interviews. Almost all of the documents 8 out of 9 showed that the students made a
lot of grammatical mistakes such as capitalizing all the proper names, using the
wrong tenses, wrong subject-verb agreement, wrong proposition, making spelling
mistakes, using wrong punctuation, and using the wrong articles. Participants 3, 4, 5,
8, 13, 14, 17, and 20 claimed that they were facing grammatical problems while
writing their PhD proposals for several reasons. Here are some examples from the
documents.

## Grammatical Mistakes

Participant 3 commented that he made many mistakes in tenses, and verbs. He wrote
in his proposal, *"The four types of deviant behavior are"*; but the correct phrase
should be *"The four types of deviant behavior can be seen in"* (Document 1,

Participant 3). Another example, participant 4 who was majoring in Management Technology programme wrote: *"This method of data collection will be use in this study"* but the correct sentence is *"This method of data collection will be used in this study"* (Document 2, Participant 4).

Participant 5, majoring in Information Communication Technology programme, used two verbs in the same sentence. For example: "*This chapter aims to explain the research methodology*", but the correct sentence is "*This chapter explains the research methodology*" (Document 3, Participant 5).

At the same time, Participant 13 was always confused on how and when to use the subject verb agreement in the context. For example: "*These teachers teaches various major of study*". But the correct sentence is "*These teachers teach students from various majors*" (Document 7, Participant 13)

Capitalization

Some participants such as participant 3 could not identify the proper names which needed to be capitalized. For example: Didn't capitalize proper names such as "Jordan and Amman". The names of the companies in Jordan such as "Zain, Orange, Express, Umniah" and author names such as "Sekaran, Ismail" (Document 1, Participant 3).

Participant 4 made spelling mistakes in terms of the meaning of words such as lift and left. He wrote in his proposal: "*The lift side of the model*". It is supposed to be "*The left side of the model*". (Document 2, Participant 4).

In addition, participant 13 made spelling mistakes because he was confused with the meaning of words. In his proposal, participant 13 wrote "here" instead of "her" (Document 2, Participant 7).

Articles

Participant 5 made mistakes when using articles such as a, an, and the. He wrote: "*The second stage of the research is a prototype construction and development*". The correct sentence is "*The second stage of the research is the prototype development*" (Document 3, Participant 5).

Punctuation

Punctuation is very important in academic writing. Participant 13 used punctuation marks many times in his writing. For example: "*For my research, I use the general methodology in research design, the reason I choose this methodology because, it offers*". The sentence is supposed to be:"*I use a general methodology for my research because it is the most suitable one*" (Document 7, Participant 13).

**4.2.1.3 Limited Vocabulary**

The last sub-theme which emerged from this research was limited vocabulary. About half of the participants (14 out of 21) admitted that they had problem with vocabulary because they had limited vocabulary, they didn't know which word to use, or they didn't know the correct terms or concepts in their field. Participants 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 16, 17, and 18 claimed that they had problem with regards to vocabularies when writing in English. They expressed having limited vocabularies because of factors such as their background in using English, English as their foreign or second language and didn't know how to write academically. For example, participant 5 said:

> I don't have enough vocabulary to start the conversation or writing in English, or to write down my thinking. I cannot rewrite the sentences with different way because I do not have plenty of words. At the same time, I do not know how to select the keywords to search (Participant, 5).

Similarly, participant 8 stated that it took him a long time to find the most suitable word to use which made him worried. He commented:

> I feel I have less vocabulary to start writing my proposal. Sometimes, I stop writing long time until I can remember one word and maybe I can't remember it faster. Actually, this thing makes me unsatisfied with my work (Participant, 8).

In addition, some participants could not differentiate between some similar words such as required and need. Participant 14 remarked:

> Another challenge is the correct usage of words. Sometimes, I misuse the words need or required. Sometimes I use the one in the place of another one which give very weak sentences. Writing PhD thesis in English is much difficult than writing other tasks because it is related

to specific area and specific domain and specific discipline of knowledge it will be governed by a set of idioms and keywords which is related to this discipline while the writing other tasks, maybe it will not be governed or control by specific keywords or idioms. This is my weak part also (Participant, 14).

Participant 3 expressed similar opinion about the problem of using vocabularies. He said that he could not differentiate the meaning of some words such as "Resources and Source" (Participant, 3).

Moreover, participant 16 admitted not having enough vocabulary to improve his writing. He said:

> For me, I feel struggle to write in English as I don't have enough vocabulary to use. At the same time, I used many vocabularies in the wrong place or situation (Participant, 16).

Even those who were majoring in Applied Linguistic programme admitted that they were facing the same problem with having limited vocabulary. Participant 11 said:

> For sure, every one write in a language which is not his mother tongue will face difficulties. For example, when I start write my PhD proposal in English, I felt that I have limited amount of vocabulary even I am majoring in English language especially while writing the literature review (Participant, 11).

Another major cause of writing apprehension mention by half participants of this study was limited vocabulary. The finding of this study is similar with other studies done by (Al Fadda, 2012; Daud et al., 2005; Daly, 1978a; Khan, 2011; Latif 2007; Mo, 2012; Salem, 2007).

The next discussion on the sub-theme are verbatim transcriptions taken from the supervisors' interview data and PhD document analysis which the researcher used to triangulate with the students' interview data. The researcher triangulated the participants' responses with their supervisors. Supervisor 8 who supervised participant 19 commented that students in general used only a limited number of words. They did not know the meaning of some words such as riddle, digging, onset, manifested, personify and prevalent. She said:

> I had a problem with my students writing, especially participant 19. He doesn't know the important words which are related to his field of writing. I always commented on his proposal about missing vocabularies, using vocabularies in a wrong situation (Supervisor 8, Participant 5).

Supervisor 4 supervised participant 11 who was majoring in Applied Linguistics programme. He claimed that his students had limited number of reporting verbs which had restricted the quality of their papers. He said:

> During my supervision for Middle East students, I have realized that those students are using very limited reporting verbs in their thesis. I have tried to guide them by giving new reporting verbs to enhance their vocabularies. But after a while, I found they are still using their own vocabularies only (Supervisor 4, Participant 11).

Supervisor 1 who supervised participants 3 and 8 has the same views about vocabulary. She claimed that both students were unwilling to write their proposals as what she suggested. They used very simple words or informal words which were not academically written. She said:

> Oh, vocabulary. This part was the most difficult part to comments on because both Jordanian students used informal vocabularies in their

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academic writing. I have worked with them until they become better than before (Supervisor 1, Participant 3 & 8).

The researcher triangulated the participants' responses with their PhD proposals. From the document, it was found that participant 18 used some vocabularies in the wrong context. For example, he used the following word for one factor called "tradition technology". After a long discussion with his supervisor he changed it to "common technology". These two words have the same meaning in Arabic but in English we cannot use the two words interchangeably.

A similar example was mentioned by participant 3. Participant 3 could not differentiate between words such as *resources* and *source*. Another document showed that students used the same linking words such as moreover, in addition. The researcher found that in document 6, the student number 17 received many comments on the linking words because he did not use them correctly.

The main theme of present study was Lack of knowledge in English structure which contained three sub themes: Problems with coherence, Problems in mechanism of writing, and Limited vocabulary. These findings are similar to the once found by other studies done by (Al Fadda, 2012; Daud et al., 2005; Daly, 1978a; Khan, 2011; Latif 2007; Mo, 2012; Salem, 2007).

**4.2.2 Theme 2: Negative Attitude toward Writing.**

The second theme which emerged from this study was negative attitude toward writing. This theme means that students are afraid of writing because of various reasons such as no motivation to write in English, and fear of evaluation. In this study, almost all of the participants (17 out of 21) admitted of having negative attitude toward writing. Table 4.2 displays the main theme, the sub-themes and occurrence i.e. how many times the participants mention the sub-theme. The main theme is divided into two sub-themes which are lack of motivation to write in English, and fear of evaluation.

*Table 4.2. Causes of Writing Apprehension (Theme 2)*

| Theme | Sub-themes | Occurrence |
|---|---|---|
| Negative attitude toward writing | *Lack of motivation to write in English. | 16 |
| | *Fear of evaluation. | 10 |

**4.2.2.1 Lack of Motivation to Write in English.**

As shown in Table 4.2, majority of the students (16 out of 21) mentioned that they lack the motivation to write in English. This sub-theme is an unexpected sub-theme for the researcher because the participants of this study are PhD students and they are required to write in English. Participants 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 14, 16, 19, 20, and 21 claimed that they lack the interest to write in English. Some of the participants preferred to write in Arabic language which is their mother tongue because they believed they could express their ideas and thoughts faster and easier than writing in English. Participant 2 said:

Writing in Arabic language is better and easier for me rather than writing In English because while writing in Arabic language, I can express my ideas about the topic that I am writing on. This is because that Arabic language is more rich language. You can find one vocabulary has different alternative vocabularies that you can use them (Participant, 2).

Participant 3 gave similar response:

It is totally different and it needs more skills because in Arabic this is our own mother tongue. So, when we write in Arabic is much easier. Furthermore, when you write in English, there is a lot of alternative words. You can play with the words and sentences. You can write the way you like it. I mean, you change the way you write several ways which I lack to write like that. So, for me English is more difficult. At the same time, I prefer to write my PhD in Arabic language because it's easier for me (Participant, 3).

Another participant i.e. participant 4 also said:

For me, writing in Arabic is easier than writing in English because Arabic language is my mother tongue. I feel more comfortable to write in my mother tongue. It is my mother tongue, that's why I don't feel apprehensive when writing in Arabic (Participant, 4).

Participant 5 expressed his problems when writing in English. He lacked the interest to write in English as well because he preferred to write in his mother tongue. He said:

Writing in Arabic is easier than writing in English because my mother tongue is Arabic. In Arabic I can make the connection between the sentences, have many words, and rewrite the sentences again. But in English I face difficulties to make the connection between the sentences, the difficulties to write the sentences by the right way without grammatical mistakes, I don't have enough vocabulary to write down my thinking (Participant, 5).

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Some of the participants associated apprehension with lack of motivation to write in English because they considered themselves to be new users of English language. They rarely wrote in English before coming to Malaysia. They were still hesitant to write in English. Participant 7 expressed this idea by saying:

> I always like to write in Arabic language because Arabic is my original language from my school until 1999, I was writing in Arabic but when I came to Malaysia, the environment force me to speak or write English. Can we say English is still new language for me. I still did not get good skills of English language such as writing. The Arabic is better for me because it is original language for me (Participant, 7).

Participant 19 commented that writing in English was more difficult than writing in his mother tongue because he had limited vocabularies in English. He expressed his problem by saying:

> I think writing in English is difficult than writing in Arabic because my mother tongue is Arabic. Also, we are Arabic people, so, we know what we want to say when writing in your mother tongue. But in English you have to find the exact words sometimes the suitable words for your writing (Participant, 19).

Even those who were majoring in Applied Linguistic programme believed that writing in Arabic was easier than writing in English due to it being their mother tongue. Participant 11 said:

> Even I am majoring in English language, but I think writing in English is most difficult than writing in Arabic language because English language is not my mother tongue. But Arabic language is my mother tongue, it is my first language. So, when you want to write in Arabic, you already know the grammars and you have enough vocabulary to write. On the other hand, English language, you should learn more. You should know the grammars, and you should have a large amount of vocabulary. So, writing in Arabic is easier (Participant, 11).

**4.2.2.2 Fear of Evaluation**

The second sub-theme which emerged from the main theme was fear of evaluation. About half of the participants (10 out of 21) said that they were worried about evaluation coming from their supervisors or examiners' comments. Participants 2, 4, 5, 8, 10, 12, 17, 18, 19, and 21 stated that they were worried to write PhD thesis in English because PhD thesis was not like other kinds of writing. All the participants in this sub-theme agreed that the purpose of the feedback was to improve their level of their writing because writing PhD thesis needed high quality writers. Participant 5 said:

> In the PhD thesis, this is for somebody will read it. I mean, if you not explain more or not writing very well in English, maybe he will give you fail because he is not understand your idea (Participant, 5).

Participant 19 believed that evaluation by panelists would increase his apprehension when writing in English. He said:

> Everything in your PhD thesis will be judge by the panels. So, you have to write something new and perfect (Participant, 19).

Similarly, participant 4 believed that writing PhD thesis was different than writing other tasks such as writing for journals or writing for examinations. He commented:

> Writing a PhD thesis is the highest quality rather than other writings because there are others who want to evaluate your writing, your work (Participant, 4).

Participant 17 also gave similar answer as participant 4 i.e. writing PhD thesis was different than writing other tasks. He said:

> Writing a PhD thesis is totally different from other tasks because at the end, there is evaluator who wants to check your writing. So, sometimes you will take long time to write 1 paragraph only. You

need to express your ideas clearly. You need to be aware of the language use whether grammar, vocabulary (Participant, 17).

Participant 12 highlighted an important issue by claiming that the level of apprehension in writing would increase when he had to write in formal situations such as writing PhD thesis. He said:

My apprehension for the formal situations will be high because others will evaluate your works (Participant, 12).

Similarly, participant 18 believed that writing a PhD thesis was different from other writing tasks because someone would be supervising you and the quality of your work needed to be high and you would have a committee to judge your work at the end. He commented:

Writing a PhD thesis is totally different from other tasks because writing a thesis, you need to submit your work to your supervisor who wants to check your work. After that, there is a committee for defence or viva that they will discuss your work. So, it should be with high quality of writing (Participant, 18).

Even the one who was majoring in Applied Linguistics programme commented that when he started thinking about the result of his writing he would be more apprehensive. Participant 21 commented:

Whenever I felt this writing may make me fail or may make me pass, or I have to get a high grade to do it. This make me apprehend to write it (Participant, 21).

The researcher triangulated the findings of the main theme negative attitude toward writing and the sub-themes which are lack of motivation to write in English and fear of evaluation in two ways supervisors' interviews and document analysis. Some of the signs of apprehension mentioned by the supervisors when interviewed were

similar to those signs expressed by the participants. Supervisor 1 who was supervising participants 3 and 8 was frustrated that her supervisees could not perform up to her expectations. The participants did not understand the topic that they were doing. Supervisor 1 said:

> Participant 3 & 8 are a diligent student but I think sometimes he is not serious with his work. I suggest he works on an interesting topic but so far, he has not able to deliver up to my expectation yet. He is yet to show me that he understands and masters well the topic he is currently working on (Supervisor 1; Participant 3 & 8).

Similarly, supervisor 2 who was supervising participants 4 and 17 believed that his supervisees lacked the motivation to write in English based on the work that they submitted to him. He said:

> Those two students are quite misunderstanding the topic that they are doing in. They submit their works to me as it's unrelated work, especially the theories and the literature review. I have never expected such works to be written (Supervisor 2; Participant 4 & 17).

Supervisor 3 believed that her supervisee was not motivated to do the PhD topic even though he was about to submit for VIVA. She said:

> My supervisee is not motivated to do his PhD under his topic, even though he has chosen the topic himself. Sometimes, we argue and discuss about the topic which I believed he is not fully understand it well even he is nearly to submit for VIVA (Supervisor 3; Participant 10).

Furthermore, other supervisors such as 6 and 8 mentioned that their supervisees had the fear of evaluation. Supervisor 6 discussed about his student's feeling during the defence session. The student was extremely anxious. The supervisor said:

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> My student is quite different than other PhD students that I supervised because he feel more anxiety when he comes to the evaluation part whether from the examiners or from my comments. I can feel it, and I tried to handle his feeling always (Supervisor 6; Participant 13).

Similarly, supervisor 8 discussed about his student's extreme fear of the negative comments. She said:

> My student always late to submit his works because he is afraid of the negative comments. He has told me that in his culture they have never got direct critique. That's why he tries to release this problem slowly (Supervisor 8; Participant 19).

Another main theme which emerged from this study was Negative attitude toward writing which was divided into Lack of motivation and fear of evaluation. Half of the participants associated Lack of motivation and fear of evaluation to be other causes of writing apprehension. These findings are the same as those found by other researchers such as (Clark, 2005; Latif, 2007; Mo, 2012, Reeves, 1997; Tighe, 1987). The researchers found Lack of motivation and fear of evaluation to be the most frequently cited cause of writing apprehension by the participants in their studies. In the present study, some of the participants said that they were afraid of being evaluated because they were very concerned about the kind of feedback that they would get from their supervisors and the examiners.

### 4.2.3 Theme 3: Negative Writing Experience in the Past

The third theme which emerged from this study was negative writing experiences in the past. Negative writing experience in the past means that participants went through a bad writing experience in the past which increased the level of apprehension. Majority of the participants (19 out of 21) admitted feeling

apprehensive because of negative writing experience in the past. This theme is divided into two sub-themes which are less practice in writing, and thinking in Arabic, and then translating into English. Table 4.3 displays the main theme of this study which is negative writing experience in the past. Occurrence refers to how many times the participants mentioned it.

*Table 4.3 Causes of Writing Apprehension (Theme 3)*

| Theme | Sub-themes | Occurrence |
|---|---|---|
| | *Less practice in writing | 13 |
| Negative Writing Experience in the Past | *Thinking in Arabic, and then translating into English. | 8 |

### 4.2.3.1 Less Practice in Writing

As shown in Table 4.3, the third theme of this study was negative writing experiences in the past which is divided into two sub-themes; less practice in writing, and thinking in Arabic, and then translating into English. The first sub-theme of this study is concerned with less practice in writing. About half of the participants (13 out of 21) admitted that they were facing problem in writing PhD thesis because they did not write in English much. They associated this problem to the past learning process starting from school, bachelor and then master levels. Some of the participants said that they started writing in English when they came to further their studies in Malaysia and some of them said that they had never written in English for academic purpose. Participant 4 said that he had never written in English before he came to Malaysia because he obtained his first and second degrees from Ukraine which used Russian as the medium of instruction. He said:

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I rarely wrote in English before I start writing my proposal because I graduated from Ukraine while the medium of instruction is Russian language. Actually, I start concern about writing in English since I register for PhD in UUM. Since that time, writing in English was a new thing for me because I left my country to study in Ukraine when I was 18 years old. So, I did not use English at all in Ukraine because the medium of instruction there is in Russian language. For example, my project for master degree I wrote in Russian language. The most difficult things while writing my project was I have to write the abstract in English language. So, I used Google translation to translate it to English. But when I have a look to that page now; I found it almost wrong. It is missing to the organization and has grammatical mistakes (Participant, 4).

Likewise, participant 8 stated that writing was the most difficult skill to acquire because he had never written in English before coming to Malaysia. He commented:

Writing is the most difficult skills because my background to write in English is very weak. I rarely write in English before. I start writing in English when I came to Malaysia but before that I rarely write in English during my bachelor or master because the courses were toughed in Arabic language (Participant, 8).

Participant 6 talked about his background education and when he started writing in English. He said:

My bachelor and master degree were in Arabic language. Only a few subjects were taught in English language during my bachelor and master degrees (Participant, 6).

Participant 15 explained the reasons behind his weaknesses in writing which was regarding his educational background and the major that he studied which was focusing on numbers rather than writing itself. He remarked:

I started writing in English just 3 years ago before that I never write in English. During the school, I write at the final stage. We try to write in English. For bachelor degree, I just study in science language which is not totally depending on writing. It depends on mathematics (Participant, 15).

However, participant 20 commented on an important issue which was the differences between studying in English and writing in English. He said:

> I studied in English language for my bachelor and master degrees but studying in English is different than writing in English. If you just write to answer the question is different from write something such as thesis or story, letters. It is quite different between studying and writing (Participant, 20).

Participant 7 associated his problem of writing to less practice, and educational background. He commented:

> My background before, I didn't studying English very well. When I came to Malaysia, I study the English but writing is still very low. I take one subject for my bachelor degree in English language only because bachelor was in Arabic language. Even for my school, they were concentrate on speaking, grammar, reading more than writing. They did not ask us to write so much. Also, the teacher was not professional of the teach us. I start write the English since 5 years almost 2005 only (Participant, 7).

The sub-theme less practice of writing of the main theme Negative Writing Experience in the Past is similar to the findings by Al-Khasawneh (2010) who found it as the most frequesntly mentioned cause of writing apprehsnion by the Arab postgraduate students in UUM.

### 4.2.3.2 Thinking in Arabic and then Translating into English.

The third sub-theme which emerged from this study was thinking in Arabic and then translating it into English. 8 out of the 21 participants claimed that they used this strategy since their childhood. By using this strategy, writing apprehension might increase because the meaning of words might change when thinking in one language, and then translating it into another language. For example, participant 2 explained

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that he wrote long sentences because he had to think in his mother tongue before he could start to write in English. He said:

> Thinking in my own language before I start writing in English language. That's why my sentences were very long (Participant, 2).

Participant 2 associated thinking and writing in Arabic as the cause of this problem. It is acceptable to write long paragraphs in Arabic but in English the paragraphs are usually short and precise. Participant 2 said:

> The way that I write was too long sentences, too long paragraphs but when I was reading other articles, they can express their ideas with a short sentence and paragraphs. This is because the difference between writing in English and writing in Arabic. It is accepted to write a long sentence in Arabic language (Participant, 2)

Participant 16 stated that he was using this strategy whereby his apprehension of writing increased day by day. He said:

> I always thinking how to write in Arabic, then translate it to English which I think is the wrong way. So, this problem is really increased my apprehension of writing because once you translate from Arabic to English, you will get a lot of mistakes, misunderstanding the ideas (Participant, 16).

Similarly, participant 19 said that he always wrote down his ideas in Arabic language, and then translated them into English. In the end, he found that this way was totally wrong because he produced poor sentences and paragraphs. He commented:

> Sometimes, I wrote down my ideas in Arabic, then, translate them to English. Sometimes, when I translate some paragraphs from Arabic to English, it will be very weak (Participant, 19).

Participant 15 gave similar views in translating ideas from one language to another:

> I try to change the sentence or the idea from Arabic to English which I found it is not work well. So, I go back to learn more English and practice more English by myself to get more good in English. So, if you want try to write your sentence from Arabic to English. It is will be totally wrong because the basic thing that you want to write in English is different from the Arabic. For me, writing in both languages are the same but I think it is the essential thing is to know how to write the basic sentence or how to construct your sentence either in English or in Arabic (Participant, 15).

To enhance the validity and the reliability of the students' interview, the researcher triangulated the students' interview with their supervisors. The theme of negative writing experience in the past was mentioned by some supervisors as well. Supervisor 4 admitted that some students like participant 11 who was majoring in Applied Linguistics programme also had a problem with coherence such as expressing ideas clearly. Supervisor 4 commented:

> I think this student has the content, he knows what he wants to write but some of the ideas are not express clearly. At time, he does not aware of the writing convention. I have the experience of student saying that quoting. You cite from somebody, you take other people ideas, you take other people words, and you didn't cite. Where is in the academic writing whenever you borrow, you have to cite. Or even the ideas, you must acknowledge those ideas in your writing because they don't belong to you. That to me is a lack among PhD students. They don't know that it is important for them to write (Supervisor 4, Participant 11).

Similarly, supervisor 5 mentioned that participant 12 who was majoring in Information Communication Technology had a problem with writing convention or writing academically. She said:

> I believe my students from Middle East countries were not on that level to write academically. As some of my students told me they have never write in English during their Bachelor or Master levels. It's a major problem faced by my students (Supervisor 5, Participant 12).

Supervisor 6 believed that his student participant 13 had problems while writing his PhD proposal because of grammar and educational background. He said:

> This student face problem with grammar because he is not native of English and education background (Supervisor 6, Participant 13).

On the other hand, supervisor 3 who was supervising participant 10 expressed about struggling to understand her student work such as disorganized ideas because he wrote his ideas in Arabic language, and then translate them into English. She said:

> At first, I faced many problems to understand my student proposal until I feel frustrated of what he is giving me. After some discussion with him, I discovered that he is writing in Arabic. Then, I asked him to attend some courses to enhance his level of writing. Now, he is nearly to submit for VIVA (Supervisor 3, Participant 10).

Similarly, supervisor 8 who was supervising participant 19 claimed that during the first semester he was not satisfied with his student's writing which was different from what he was familiar. He said:

> My student has the ability to write well, but the problem is he writes with a way which is different from Malaysian's way. For example: the student don't use punctuation for the whole paragraph as he explained to me it's a way to write in Arabic, while English use punctuation in the writing (Supervisor 8, Participant 19).

An interesting finding found in this study was the response given by the participants whereby they think in Arabic and then translate it into English. One of the reasons giving by the participants was because they found it easy to express their ideas in mother tongue, Arabic compared to English. Another reason mentioned by the

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participants was because they found it easy to write long paragraphs in Arabic compared to writing short paragraphs in order to be precise in English.

**4.2.4 Theme 4: Inadequate Knowledge in Academic Writing.**

The fourth theme which emerged from this study was inadequate knowledge in academic writing. Some of the Jordanian PhD students were found struggling with academic writing for several reasons. Half of the participants (12 out of 21) declared that they were weak in research methods. This theme is divided into two sub-themes which are weak in writing the PhD proposal such as writing introduction (Chapter One), writing literature review (Chapter Two) and writing the methodology (Chapter Three). The second sub-theme was problems with writing styles. Table 4.4 displays the main theme, and two sub-themes, as well as the occurrence of these themes.

*Table.4.4. Causes of Writing Apprehension (Theme 4)*

| Theme | Sub-theme | Occurrence |
|---|---|---|
| Inadequate Knowledge in Academic Writing | *Weak in writing the PhD proposal such as writing introduction (Chapter One), writing literature review (Chapter Two) and writing the methodology (Chapter Three) | 12 |
| | *Problems with writing style | 6 |

Participants in this study admitted having problem in writing their proposal especially during the first semester because they wrote their master thesis in Arabic language or they did follow UUM standard of writing the thesis. Participant 2

commented that he did not know how to write his PhD proposal because his mother

tongue is Arabic language and he wrote his master thesis in Arabic. He said:

> I faced a problem of how to write a PhD thesis at the beginning
> because I have did my bachelor and master degrees in Arabic language
> (Participant, 2).

Likewise, participant 7 said that he was not familiar how to write a research proposal

during the first semester following UUM standard. He said:

> I do not know how I should start with the PhD proposal because I do
> not follow UUM standard of writing thesis because it is not clear to
> follow first, then because I think there is no different between UUM
> and my old university. For example, UUM standard is complicated for
> me at the beginning such as I have to complete write my three chapter
> in one year (Participant, 7).

### 4.2.4.1 Weak in Writing the PhD Proposal

Table 4.4 shows that the Jordanian students were struggling with writing the PhD

proposal which consisted of three chapters. These are:

A- Chapter one (Introduction) which consists of writing the introduction, problem

statement, the research questions, and significance of the study.

The most difficult step mentioned by the students was that they had problem to write

the problem statement of the research clearly and their supervisors required them to

do so. The participants said that most of the supervisors' comments were on the

problem statements. Participant 11 who was majoring in Applied Linguistics

programme also admitted that he was facing a huge problem to write his problem

statement clearly because he had to refine the problem statement, organize the ideas

and add the latest references. He said:

My supervisor asked me many times to refine my problem statement, organizing the ideas in the problem and to add some information by using a newest reference. So, these matters in the problem take long time with me and make me feel more apprehensive (Participant, 11).

Participant 3 admitted that problem statement was the most difficult part to write. He had to write it many times. He said:

The problem statement. It takes me long time to clarify my problem statement. It was something unclear, something needs to rearrange many times. To come up with the ideas that makes the problem statements looks very clear and be understood from others (Participant, 3).

Participant 8 said that he focused on a few articles to clarify his problem statement. He said:

Sometimes I focused on one article only to support my problem statement which makes it very weak (Participant, 8).

The sub-theme Weak in writing the PhD proposal of the main theme Inadequate Knowledge in Academic Writing was similar to the findings by (Al Fadda, 2012; Daud et al., 2005; Salem, 2007). The researcher found Arab students to be weak in writing thesis because of the educational system in Arab countries which is different from other countries.

Another important issue mentioned by the participants was writing the introduction in chapter one. The participants admitted that writing the introduction was one of the huge problems at the beginning of their PhD journey because the introduction of the thesis should attract the readers to continue reading the thesis. For example, participant 4 commented that he did not know how to start writing the introduction

for each chapter. He said, *"I face problem of how can I write an introduction for each section"*. Moreover, participant 14 expressed his problem to write the introduction.  He said:

> Actually I have faced many challenges during my writing PhD proposal, the first thing is writing the introdu
>
> ction, I have repeated it around 10 times because my supervisor asked me to write it in attractive way that attract the reader and give him an initial ideas and understanding for the whole thesis (Participant, 14).

Participant 11 who was majoring in Applied Linguistics programme also remarked that writing introductions for each chapter was one of the difficult steps in writing. He commented that it was too difficult to write the introduction because he believed that the introduction should lead to the problem statement which is the most difficult step to write. He commented:

> Sometimes, my supervisor asked me to add some paragraphs to the introduction. These paragraphs suppose to be a suitable one for the introduction. At the same time, it supposes to lead to the problem statement. So, I have a problem to select what should I write in the introduction section. So, this matter makes me more apprehensive (Participant, 11).

Likewise, writing the significance of the study was another challenge faced by the participants. Participant 3 explained that he did not know how to categorize the significance of the study into two parts theoretical and practical significance. In relation to this problem, participant 3 said:

> It takes me long time to write the significant of my study because it is divided into two type theoretical and practical. So, this divided make me feel more apprehensive because I did not read it in other works. So, I do not know how to divide it. As much as I write the significant, I always feel that it is not written in a good quality (Participant, 3).

Participant 11 who was majoring in Applied Linguistics programme also claimed that writing the significance of the study was another important issue to talk about. He had problem to write it clearly because his supervisor asked him to divide it into two main parts which were practical and theoretical gaps. He said:

> My supervisor asked me to make the significance of the study in two parts. Practical and theoretical gaps. So, this divided make me feel more apprehensive because I didn't read it in other works. So, I don't know how to divide it (Participant, 11).

Another challenge mentioned by the participants was writing the research questions of the study. Participant 21, majoring in Applied Linguistics programme said that he spent 2 months to write his research questions correctly. Participant 11 who was also majoring in Applied Linguistics programme admitted that he had to write the research questions many times. He said:

> I rewrite the research questions many times because of the grammatical mistakes such as change the research question from what to how (Participant, 11).

The last challenge mentioned by the participants was writing the hypothesis in Chapter One. It was clearly mentioned by participant 3 that he did not know how to write. He mentioned that his supervisor always asked him to rewrite the hypothesis because it was not written correctly. He commented:

> The structure of the hypothesis, I have redone my hypothesis so many times to do it with the proper way to looks good because I don't know how to write it well. The next discussion is on Chapter two (Participant, 3).

B- Chapter two (Literature review) which consists of elements such as writing the literature review, justifying the work, and selecting the variables).

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Writing literature review was the most difficult chapter from some participants' perspectives because it has the most chapters in the thesis. The participants must write it in a coherent manner to make it understandable to the readers. Some of the Jordanian PhD students considered writing literature review to be very difficult because they had to organize it well. The others did not know what to include in the literature review and how to write it. Participant 12 expressed his problem as follows:

> When I came at the first time to Malaysia, I don't know how to write the literature review, or what is the meaning of the literature review (Participant, 12).

Participant 14 also commented that writing the literature review was the most difficult chapter. He said:

> The most difficult thing to write for me is writing the literature review where is the literature review considers as a backbone for the PhD thesis and it must be written in a very proper way that reflect and support all the ideas of the research of the PhD thesis (Participant, 14).

This view was supported by other participants such as participant 15 who was majoring in Information Technology programme. He shared his experience when he started writing the literature review. He said:

> At the beginning when I start write for the literature review, sometimes when I visit my supervisor and read for me, he found that when I summarize some articles, I gave a different meaning which is totally different from what the writer wants to do or wants to explain in his paper because sometimes do not understand the paper which made me to do that but the ability to write sentences coherence with each others. So, sometimes give different meaning (Participant, 15).

In addition to the above, justifying the work was the hardest part in the literature review. One has to justify whatever one writes. Participant 4 shared his experience by saying:

> I have to justify my work at any section which is too hard for me. Also, I have problem to justify why I have select the theory (Participant,4).

Participant 14 faced problem on justifying why he selected the instrument rather than the other one. He said:

> The measurement. Once I am talking about the measurement is using the instrument for each variable in my thesis. That's one of the really hard and difficult thing that I faced in my proposal because you need to justify why you chose this instrument rather than others (Participant, 14).

One more challenge mentioned by the participants was on selecting the variables. This is the most difficult part in the literature review because you need to be careful on what you decide to study. Participant 3 said:

> While I am choosing the variables for my thesis. My supervisor keeps pushing me to read everything about the variable before I take it into consideration. Since we have a lot of variables which is not studied yet. So, we have plenty of choices that we can make. So, once you take this choice, you have to be able to justify why you choose this variable. The next discussion is on Chapter three (Participant, 3).

 C- Chapter three (Methodology) which may contain the instrument, data collection method, sampling, and qualitative method.

The methodology chapter was the hardest chapter to write mentioned by some of the participants during the interview session. Some of the participants admitted that they had problems in writing the third chapter due to the background of research. Participant 3 commented:

> I have faced problem with the method of the research exactly the data collection method and the sampling. For example, when I start writing my thesis, actually I don't know anything about the method, and what method that I suppose to use for my thesis. This is maybe I can related to the bachelor and master period of studies because they did not give us all this information and knowledge we need (Participant, 3).

Some other participants had problems in organizing the methodology chapter.

Participant 4 said:

> I have faced problem with organizing the methodology section because I divided the methodology chapter into two chapters: research framework and methodology (Participant, 4).

However, participant 21 who was majoring in Applied Linguistics programme stated that he was good in quantitative method, but the nature of the topic that he was writing on needed a qualitative method. He commented:

> I faced difficulties to follow qualitative research even I feel I am quite good in research methods because it is very difficult and it needs great efforts (Participant, 21).

Participant 12 commented that he was very weak in research methodology due to the background of research:

> When I came at the first time to Malaysia, I faced many problems such as I do not have any experience to write or speak in English, how to analysis the articles, what is the meaning of the literature review, how to get the problem, what is the meaning of the methodology. I think I need a course before I start my PhD because our background did not focus much on how to write a research and because we do not have enough experience. So, I lack to organize the proposal perfectly (Participant, 12).

Participant 13 was also facing the same problem with research methodology. He remarked:

> At that time, when I am going to start my PhD, I have no idea what is PhD proposal. So, if I go at that time to research methodology class, I

think it will be easy later on since I am going to learn how to write proposal (Participant, 13).

This view was supported by other students with different views on the issue. The earlier interview made with participant 10 said that the weakness of his research was because he had no research experience during his period of study in his country. He said:

> Writing is the most difficult skill for me because the research background is weak in our country. It was too difficult to write in English while you do not have enough knowledge on how to write a research in English. Because of this, usually it takes me more than 10 hours daily to study until I can express my ideas on a paper (Participant, 10).

### 4.2.4.2 Problems with Writing Style

The second sub-theme which emerged from this study was problems with writing style that is writing the references, citation and following the APA style 6$^{th}$ edition. 6 out of 21 participants admitted that they were having problem in this issue which increased their level of apprehension. For example, participant 2 stated that he had problem with writing the references because he graduated from Jordan where he wrote the references in Arabic which is different from English. It took him some time before he could understand how to write the references. He said:

> I faced problem with APA style because the way you make a citation in English is different from Arabic language (Participant, 2).

Similarly, other participants shared the same problem of doing the citation correctly and writing the references at the end. The researcher observed that those students who were having this problem graduated from Jordan while those students who

graduated from Malaysia did not face the same problem. For example, participant 3

expressed his problem of following APA style by saying:

> I have faced problem with APA style to make the references on how to write the citation. For examples, when you write "et al" for several authors (Participant, 3).

Other participants such as 14, 17, 18, and 20 admitted facing the same problem.

Participant 14 said:

> I have faced problem with the PhD requirements especially the requirement of the APA style for writing and referencing (Participant, 14).

Participant 18 who was majoring in Information Communication Technology

programme said:

> I have faced problem with the PhD format such as APA style. For example, when I need to use italic (Participant, 18).

The sub-theme problem with writing style of the main theme Inadequate Knowledge

in Academic Writing was similar to the finding by Al-Khasawneh's (2010) study on

Arab postgraduate students in UUM.

The researcher triangulated the students' interviews with the supervisors to enhance

the validity and the reliability of the research. Supervisors stated that some of their

PhD students were weak in research methodology. Therefore, the students had

problem writing a good research proposal. Supervisor 1 commented on participants 3

and 8 who were majoring in Human Resource Management programme by saying:

> They have to understand better the materials on research methodology. At this stage of his work, he should at least be able to know issues

related to method and techniques to do a good piece of research (Supervisor 1, Participant 3 & 8).

This view was also supported by other supervisors. Supervisor 5 believed that his PhD student, participant 12 had to improve on his problem statement and had to write the literature review. He said:

> My student stuck of writing his problem statement; I have asked him more than 10 times to rewrite his problem (Supervisor 5, Participant 12).

In addition, supervisor 7 and 9 stated the same idea by saying that participant 15 & 20 had problem in writing their problem statement. Supervisor 7 said:

> My student faced a problem while writing his problem statement because of his weakness to know what he has to be added in the problem. He always wrote it as a literature review part, while problem is not like that (Supervisor 7, Participant 15).

Supervisor 9 said that participant 20 had some difficulties in writing his proposal such as writing the problem statement, not proficient in English, and did not understand the research process well. He said:

> My student had three major problems as what I considered such as writing up his problem statement, the reason behind this is because he is not proficient of English, and he does not know how to do a research as it is the first time that he does (Supervisor 9, Participant 20).

Supervisor 8 also had the same opinion as the other supervisors. He admitted that his students were weak in writing the research proposal. He claimed that participant 19 had problem in writing the problem statement and to justify his work. He said:

> He faced difficulties to find the problems in his research. That is considered as the most problematic area. How you can identify the research problem, and these the research problem, you need to really understand it and evaluate the problem whether this problem it

considers as important or significant or whether it is worldwide to carry out the research and whether this problem is up to standard of PhD or master level. That is the most problematic area. From the beginning I worked with him, it seems that he has to think and read a lot and he has to come up with justifications. Why he likes to carry out this topic or area of research (Supervisor 8, Participant 19).

The second way of triangulating the main data is analyzing the document. The researcher analyzed 9 proposals as documents. The researcher discovered that the theme of causes of writing apprehension which is inadequate knowledge in academic writing could be seen in the proposals which were written by the Jordanian PhD students. About half of the participants (5 out of 9; 44%) mentioned that they faced problem in organizing the thesis whether in making a smooth flow in the methodology chapter or in numbering the sub-headings in the proposal. Participants 3, 4, 8, 14 and 17 claimed that they faced problem in organizing the thesis while they were writing their PhD proposals. Some of them faced problem with the structure of the chapters, others had problem with the instrument, how to choose the questionnaire and failed to number the sub-headings for the proposal. Other problems mentioned by the participants were related to writing the research questions and objectives, writing the problem statement, writing the hypothesis, writing the literature review, and writing the conclusion.

The researcher has quoted some comments made by the supervisors' to show the problems that their students were facing while writing the research proposal. The supervisor to participant 3 mentioned that his supervisee wrote his third chapter in an unfamiliar manner such as dividing his third chapter into 3-1. Introduction. 3.2

Hypothesis. 3.3. Type of study. 3.4. Research design (which contains population and sample, data collection procedure, Measurement/ instrumentation, and design of data collection method). 3.5. Analysis (which contains descriptive analysis, Factor analysis, Reliability and Validity, and correlation analysis).

Supervisor 2 who supervised participant 17 commented on the third chapter that needed to be rewritten and restructure because it contained too much literature on the methodology rather than on the method which was used to do the research. This chapter looked like a literature review chapter rather than a methodology chapter.

As mentioned earlier, the students were having problems in writing the introduction section. The participants in this study admitted that they did not know exactly what they were supposed to write in the introduction. For example, participant 3 always wrote a short introduction of each chapter and he always received comments from his supervisor to elaborate on it. This is a sample of his introduction to Chapter 3 from his proposal:

> The present chapter provides a description of the research methodology of the study. It begins by the hypothesis, and type of study, then the research design by explaining specifically how the sample was selected, data collected, variables measured, and data analyzed. (Document 3, Participant 5).

On the other hand, participant 8 lacked the ability to write a brief introduction for each new idea such as:

> "*The frequent recourse to arbitration to solve disputes arising from international business transaction involving state*". The correction was

> *"It has to be acknowledged from the very beginning that the frequent…"* (Document 8, Participant 8).

Furthermore, some students had problem in writing the research questions and the objectives correctly. Participant 17 received a comment from his supervisor who said that this participant could not follow the correct order of presenting questions and objectives which should be from research problem, to research objectives and then research questions. An example of this is:

> *"What is the impact on firms' performance after e-government adoption by business?"*. After revision the questions becomes, *"What is the impact of e-government adoption among businesses on firms' performance?"* (Document 6, Participant 17).

Similarly, participant 4 had problem in writing the research questions. For example:

> *"Which are the technological factors that influence the uptake of e-learning among working adults in Jordan"*? The correction was *"What are the technological factors that influence the uptake of e-learning among working adults in Jordan"*? (Document 2, Participant 4).

The researcher analyzed 9 proposals. It was discovered that 8 out of 9 proposals had problem with writing style that is following the APA style and in-text citation when they were writing their PhD proposal. Participants 3, 4, 8, 13, 14, 16 17, and 20 claimed that they had problem in writing references. Here are some examples from the documents. All the participants were confused how to write the references correctly using APA style and on how to write the in-text-citations. For example, the researcher found the document 8 that participant 8 admitted his weakness of writing the references. For example, the participants had problem when to use "et al" or how to write the citation at the end of the sentence.

> According to Teseema & Scoeters (2006),... Meyer and Allen developed a framework that.... ( Meyer and Allen, 1990), (Document 8, Participant 8).

While analyzing the documents, the researcher found 3 out of 9 of the documents had problem in numbering the points. Participants 3, 4 and 20 claimed that they used numbering to explain their points instead of writing it in a paragraph form. For example, participant 3 wrote:

> The collection and of data will be carried out as follows: 1- The researcher contacts the telecommunication company managers and fixed a date to distribute the questionnaire. 2- The researcher will meet the managers to explain their roles in answering the questions before disturbing the questionnaire. 3- On average, it takes the respondents 15-20 minutes to answer the questionnaire (Document 1, Participant 3).

On the other hand, the researcher triangulated the students' interview in two ways which are interviewing the supervisors as well as analyzing the documents. It has been discussed earlier about the similarities between the participants' perspectives and supervisors' perspective and documentaries on writing apprehension. The researcher would like to highlight on some differences between what the students mentioned and what the supervisors said during the interview sessions. The supervisors' perspective is almost the same as the students' perspective regarding the causes of writing apprehension except for a few cases. Supervisor 1 had different opinion from participants 3 and 8 who were majoring in Human Resource Management programme. She discussed about time, English proficiency, preparation of materials, and argument. Supervisor 1 said:

Challenges are plenty. One of the big challenges is that participant 3 and 8 like to rush into things because they want to finish early. They fail to acknowledge that doing a thesis is a marathon experience and not a sprint. When students are in a hurry, they fail to understand their work well, and hence are not able to defend their work well. Secondly, they do not have good English proficiency skill. As a result, the work is de-motivating and uninspiring. Sometimes students just simply submit their work without any effort to proofread first their work, and this is very frustrating. Consequently, the work never gets assessed or takes a long time to be assessed. This delays the whole process.

Sometimes, they also come without much preparation, meaning that they do not show or show little effort in their work. I expect students to come to me with some kind of prepared work, especially after they have been given some deadlines. While some are good, others need to beef up their performance.

International students like to argue a lot. They do not listen well but they argue a lot without much understanding of what they are talking. It is good that they can assert their ideas but at some point they also need to take heed of what the supervisors say and suggest (Supervisor 1, Participants 3 & 8).

Supervisor 9 who was supervising participant 20, was majoring in Information Technology programme, commented that international students liked to argue too much on the process of a research without much understanding. She said:

My international supervisees liked to argue of the process of a research because they liked to follow without much reading (Supervisor 9, Participant 20).

In addition, supervisor 6 had different opinion on his supervisee, participant 13 who was majoring in Accounting programme. He said this student had problem with understanding his responsibilities as a supervisee. He said:

My supervisee does not understand what he has to learn to success. He asks me every single level, and as what I believe it's his responsible (Supervisor 6, Participant 13).

In relation to students who are studying abroad or overseas, the researcher found culture differences between the Jordanian PhD students and their Malaysian supervisors. The supervisors in the present study found that the Jordanian students were influenced by their culture when writing their proposal. For example, some of them refused to use full stop because the way of writing in Arabic is different from English. Another example is that some of the Arab students in UUM were very demanding. One supervisor said:

> The other thing that I found quite interesting is that some students from the Arab countries are very demanding. Demanding meaning that, they want this and that where is Malaysian culture is big reserve. They will relax then they will decide, they will come but for the Arab students they will say I want this, I want that. So, it's totally different.

A study done by Al-Ahmed (2010) on Egyptian students found a number of socio-cultural challenges emerged from the data. Both teachers and students admitted that there were some socio-cultural issues that created problems to students' learning of English writing at the university level. These issues included pre-university learning experiences, examination culture, lack of reading habit and L1 interference in L2 writing. These issues may affect students when writing in English.

The supervisors in this study had the same opinion with Wang and Li (2008) about the international students understanding their supervisors' expectations and academic standards. At the same time, it is also equally important for supervisors to understand international students' supervisory needs and to develop intercultural sensitivity in their postgraduate research supervision. One supervisor said:

> But to me, both are very interesting because for the supervisors normally they will entertain different kind of cultures because every culture is unique. As long as you can finish the work at the end of the day, what count is to finish the work, you finish what you started. But, of course respect among supervisors and supervisee. Supervisors respect the supervisee differences and supervisees respect the supervisors' differences.

To conclude, this study discovered the same causes of writing apprehension among Arab students in research done by Al-Khasawneh (2010) and Latif (2007). Moreover, Jordanian culture is similar to the Arab culture because they share the same language, attitude, behaviour, and religion.

## 4.3 The Effects of Writing Apprehension

The second research question for this study: what are the effects of writing apprehension from the Jordanian PhD students' perspectives? In this study, effects of writing apprehension refers to the influence of writing apprehension from the Jordanian PhD students' perspectives. Three types of effects emerged from the students' responses which are personal effects, social effects and academic effects.

Table 4.5 displays the effects of writing apprehension with three main themes and their sub-themes which are: personal effects including anxiety, health problems, and depression. The second main theme is social effects which includes isolation. The last main theme is academic effects which included low academic performance. Table 4.5 also displays the occurrence of each sub-theme which shows how many times the sub-themes were mentioned by the participants.

*Table.4.5. Effects of Writing Apprehension*

| Themes | Sub-theme | Occurrence |
|---|---|---|
| Personal Effects | Anxiety | 13 |
| | Health Problems | 13 |
| | Depression | 12 |
| Social Effects | Isolation | 8 |
| Academic Effects | Low academic performance | 5 |

### 4.3.1 Personal Effects

Table 4.5 displays the effect of writing apprehension from the Jordanian PhD students' perspective. Three main themes derived were personal effects, social effects and academic effects. The participants in this study mentioned the personal effects 19 times. Personal effects have three sub-themes: anxiety, health problems such as headache, high pressure, low back pain, sleeping disorder, and lose weight or gain extra weight and depression.

### 4.3.1.1 Anxiety

The personal effects of writing apprehension are explained through the feeling of anxiety when writing. Anxiety was mentioned 13 times by the participants 2, 3, 6, 10, 11, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, and 21. The participants stated that they experienced anxiety when writing their PhD proposals in English which may affect them personally; this might be because they believed that their mother tongue which is Arabic language was the reason for the anxiety. Participant 19 admitted:

> I always face anxiety because I am Arabian and my language is Arabic. Even, I was not satisfied of my writing. So, it is increased my anxiety (Participant, 19).

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Similarly, participant 18 believed that his mother tongue affected his writing as he was interested to write in Arabic language rather than English. He said:

> Opss, my mother tongue is horrible. It makes me worry all the time. It's the major reason why I become an anxious researcher (Participant, 18).

In addition, other participants such as participant 6 commented that he experienced apprehension of writing when he made many grammatical mistakes in his writing. These mistakes made him feel anxious of what he was writing about. He said:

> I feel anxiety because I am not sure of what I have written in a case if I got many grammatical mistakes or if the reader can't understand my work smoothly (Participant, 6).

Participant 11, majoring in Applied Linguistics programme remarked that he experienced anxiety when he could not express his ideas clearly. He said:

> As you know the PhD, it's necessary for the students to find a lot of resources in English. So, sometimes I feel anxiety when for example, I feel my writing is not reach to what I want to say. So, this thing affects me to feel on anxiety (Participant, 11).

Other situations of personal effect can be associated with participants who had nervous feeling and would destroy objects around them because they sometimes could not express their ideas, and could not write clearly. Nervous feeling was mentioned by participants 3, 6, 10, 13, 14, 17, 19, 20, and 21. Participant 14 said:

> During my writing for the research proposal, I have experienced from different states of my mood. I become very moody, very aggressive, and very angry. Sometimes, I destroy everything around me like the printer, laptop, even the stapler (Participant, 14).

Participant 17 explained his feeling of nervousness because he could not express his ideas clearly. These feeling affected his anxiety of writing to his social life. He said:

> I always feel angry because I cannot express my ideas clearly. So, it is increased my angry (Participant, 17).

Participant 6 commented that he was nervous when he started to write. It also influenced his relationship with people around him. He said:

> I was nervous to communicate with my friends and my family because my thinking is on my work only (Participant, 6).

### 4.3.1.2 Health Problems

The second sub-theme which emerged from this study was health problems. The participants declared that writing apprehension affected them personally through health problems such as headache, high pressure, low back pain, sleeping disorder, and losing weight or gaining extra weight. Almost half of the participants (13 out of 21) commented that they experienced the problems when they were struggling to convey the meaning of their ideas, or paraphrasing some paragraphs. Participant 11 who was majoring in Applied Linguistics programme said:

> Sometimes, I feel headache when I want try to paraphrase the paragraph that I want to rephrase because sometime I feel that I can't convey the meaning that I suppose to convey. So, I feel headache, sometimes disappointing of what I have written (Participant, 11).

Participant 1 claimed that he always got headache when he was writing for a long time. Thinking too much had affected his apprehension of writing. He said:

> Sometimes, I can't continue my writing for long time because it makes me headache (Participant, 1).

Participant 5 experienced the same as other participants by claiming that he got headache and fought with people around him. Moreover, he had sleeping disorder because he could not express his ideas clearly in writing. Participant 5 commented:

> Sometimes, I got headache or fighting with my housemate without any reasons. I have less sleeping; sometimes I wake up from sleeping to go to write some ideas (Participant, 5).

On the other hand, other participants such as participant 13 had high blood pressure because of his feeling of anxiousness of writing. He said:

> When I feel anxious of writing because of my problems of writing especially when I can't express my ideas clearly, I got high blood pressure. This health problem makes me worry about my life as well (Participant, 13).

Similarly, Participant 10 commented that sometimes when he felt apprehensive of writing, he would escape from writing by going to sleep. This step may decrease or increase the apprehension. He commented:

> Sometimes when I am under the pressure, I sleep many hours than other days because I cannot do my work well. So, I prefer to sleep (Participant, 10).

**4.3.1.3 Depression**

The third sub-theme which emerged from this study was depression. Almost half of the participants (12 out of 21) got depression from writing because they thought that they had done their best in writing. They did not expect that they would get many comments from supervisors on their writing. Participant 7 had the same opinion of this by saying:

> It is affect me as a depression because when I submit my work to my supervisor, I always get a lot of comment. When my supervisor asks

me to change something of the proposal if there is something in the proposal wrong, I get depression because I did my best in writing (Participant, 7).

In line with this view, participant 11 declared that he was frustrated with writing because he could not express his ideas clearly. He said:

Many times I felt in frustration, anxiety and headache, especially, when I feel I can't express whatever I want to write. So, I was thinking too much until I reach the ideas that I want to say (Participant, 11).

Participant 14 explained about his experience when he became depression. He said he did not expect to get many comments as he thought he was an expert on the subject that he was writing on. He said:

At the early stage of my writing, I became depressed as I got a lot of comments on my writing as well as on the ideas. These comments made me worry about my writing, at the same time I got depression or frustrated because I didn't expect such comments (Participant, 14).

Participant 19 was in line with other interviewers by claiming that he did his best in writing. He never thought he will late to do his PhD proposal defence until his fifth semester. He believed the reason behind his delay was he got depression in the first and second semester during his PhD journey. He said:

I have done my proposal defence quite late than others because I felt frustrated at the first year of my PhD journey. The reason why I got frustrated is that because I got many comments from my supervisor as I was also very weak in writing (Participant, 19).

### 4.3.2 Social Effects

The social effect is confined to the interaction between the Jordanian PhD students and their supervisors or the interaction between the students and the society. Eight

participants out of 21 declared that writing apprehension affected them in such a way that they avoided people whom they did not like to interact with such as their friends or family. Participant 3 commented that he did not interact with people around him because he was struggling to write his PhD proposal. He said:

> I feel isolated. So, this really makes me do not want to see any other person or contact with the people for plenty of time. It changes my personally totally, I do cut all my relationship with my friends. I didn't interact with the people in terms of friendship or the way that I use to in my country. I rarely talk with my family as well because I feel depressed and demotivated (Participant, 3).

Other participants such as participants 2, 5, 10, 14, 17, and 19 said that when they became apprehensive, they would like to be alone and not talk with people around them including their families, and friends. Participant 5 said:

> Sometimes, I sit in the room and feel don't want to talk with anyone around me (Participant, 5).

Participant 10 remarked that his feeling of anxiousness of writing made isolate from people. He said:

> It is affected my relationship with my friends here. So, I become an isolation man (Participant, 10).

In addition, participant 14 said:

> My relation with my friends, I was very isolated from them. I was spent many hours alone and do not like to speak with people (Participant, 14).

Participant 17 expressed his problem by saying:

> It is affected my relationship with my friends. Sometimes, I turn off my phone because I do not want to show my angry for others (Participant, 17).

Lastly, participant 19 said:

> It is affected me negatively while I am always isolated from my friends (Participant, 19).

On the other hand, participant 2 claimed that he felt embarrassed from his friends' or supervisor's comments. He said:

> Sometimes, I feel embarrassing when I gather with my friends and start discuss about the research. So, I cannot ask many questions because they will think that I do not know how to write a thesis (Participant, 2).

In terms of social effect, the researcher triangulated the students' responses with their supervisors' responses. This theme has highlighted supervisors' perspectives on the interaction between the supervisors and their supervisees and the social environment of the supervisees in their home country. Supervisor 1 explained the problems with participants 3, and 8 when writing their PhD proposals in some cases such as the students arguing a lot with their supervisor, the students' work were not up to expectations which delayed the supervisor's feedback, and the students were not proficient in English language. She said:

> International students like to argue a lot. They do not listen well but they argue a lot without much understanding of what they are talking. It is good that they can assert their ideas but at some point they also need to take heed of what the supervisors say and suggest. The second point is supervising students and having other job responsibilities is a huge workload. I would like to attend as much as possible to my students but given the job demands I have to meet, it is frustrating that I have to pay less attention to them. Sometimes this poses a lot of delays in giving feedback to their work. I know this makes students frustrated, but they can help speed my feedback if their work is enjoyable to read and does not have so many grammatical mistakes or is simply not readable and comprehensible with so many confusing sentences or structural mistakes. The third point is English problem is a serious issue for students like participant 3 and 8. If they do not wish to improve their English language, this will definitely affect their

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doctoral performance later on. When they do not master the language well, they would not understand what my expectation is of them. When this happens, I will tend to get annoyed, disappointed and upset. I just wish they will understand the seriousness of the language issue when writing their thesis and doing their doctoral study (Supervisor 1, Participants 3 & 8).

Supervisor 4 the influence of the past experience including the social environment of participant 11 who came from the Middle East, which had affected his writing such as the style of writing, and a very demanding attitude. He said:

It's not the culture but I believe especially in writing I think this is common, you will feel research done by other scholars. You notice that the way the Middle East write is different from the way the Malaysian or Asian countries such as Thailand or Indonesian writes especially there is no punctuation. Even at the PhD level, I have other PhD students who refused to have a full stop in their writing. And then I said so where is in the academic convention you must have punctuation, so that, the readers will be able to see clearly what you are thinking and what you are expressing. The other thing that I found quite interesting is that some students from the Arab countries are very demanding. Demanding meaning that, they want this and that where is Malaysian culture is big reserve. They will relax then they will decide, they will come but for the Arab students they will say I want this, I want that. So, it's totally different. But to me, both are very interesting because for the supervisors normally they will entertain different kind of cultures because every culture is unique. As long as you can finish the work at the end of the day, what count is to finish the work, you finish what you started. But, of course respect among supervisors and supervisee. Supervisors respect the supervisee differences and supervisees respect the supervisors' differences (Supervisor 4, Participant 11).

International students follow their culture behavior for example, Arab students sometimes ask to do this and do that without justify their opinion. They always say "I want to". So, I can conclude by saying that they are demanding (Supervisor 4, Participant 9).

Supervisor 8 explained about the influence of accent of the Jordanian student which made it difficult for the supervisor to communicate with the student. He said:

> In terms of accents, it depends on the influence of the mother language. Jordan for instance like participant 19, first time when he came and see me, I just cannot understand what he is trying to say because he is talking very fast but slowly when you interact with him, you will be able to understand what he is trying to express(Supervisor 4, Participant 19).

### 4.3.3 Academic Effects

The last effects to be discussed in this study are academic effects which contribute to low academic performance. 5 participants out of 21 mentioned this issue. It is important to mention this in this study because it is related to low academic performance. Some of the participants such as participant 21 who was majoring in Applied Linguistics programme commented that he became a slow person in writing because he sometimes experienced apprehension which delayed him from achieving his goals. Participant 21 also claimed that he submitted his work late because he experienced anxiety and felt stressful about his writing. Participant 12 said:

> I was delaying my work because of the overstress. So, my supervisor got angry because I always late my work to submit it to her. That's because I need to produce a paper with high quality (Participant, 12).

Participant 8 shared his feeling of worry about his writing, so, it affected him negatively which in turn lowered his achievement. He said:

> When I feel apprehensive of writing, my achieving will be very slow (Participant, 8).

Moreover, participant 18 commented that he was always late to submit his work to his supervisor because he was not confident of his work. He expressed his problem by saying:

> I always late to submit my work because I am not sure of what I have written (Participant, 18).

In line with this view, some of the participants admitted that they were thinking of leaving their work and study during the first semester because they believed that they were unable to write in English. Although they could write in English, but the quality of writing was not up to the level of a PhD. At the same time, they were not up to the expectations of their supervisors. Participant 6 commented:

> At the first semester, I was always thinking to leave my study here and go back to further my PhD in any Arabic speaking countries to write my PhD thesis in Arabic language because it is easier for me (Participant, 6).

On the contrary, writing apprehension affected the Jordanian PhD students in a positive way. It encouraged them to produce a good piece of writing. This theme was mentioned by about half of the participants (10 out of 21). Some of the participants commented that they were interested to write in English because they considered writing in English as a big challenge for them and they had to achieve it. Participant 14 said:

> In spite of all the difficulties that accompany me while writing the research proposal in English, it was very interesting, very challenging for me to write my proposal in English (Participant, 14).

Similarly, participant 10 declared that writing in English was a major problem for him. On the other hand, his anxiousness of writing in English affected him positively. He said:

> The truth is English is a really problem for me. But I consider my anxious of writing as an encourage to finish my study and go back home to make my family and parents happy (Participant, 10).

Other participants shared the same views by saying that writing in English encouraged them to finish their work in a good manner. Participant 7 said:

> Once I feel anxiety, I read more to improve my writing because I think of my family those who are waiting my achievement (Participant, 7).

The second research question dealt with the effects of writing apprehension. The findings of this study showed that writing apprehension affected the Jordanian PhD students in three ways which were: Personal effect, Social effect, and Academic effect. However, most of the studies associated writing apprehension with writing performance (Corbett-Whittier, 2004; Gardner et al., 2005; and Stapa, 1998); self-esteem (Hassan, 2001); Self-efficacy (Chung and Nam's, 2007; Latif, 2007; Pajares, 2003), individual experience (Reeves, 1997; Steve and Tonia's, 1999); attitude and motivation Stapa (1998); Occupation decisions Daly and Shamo (1978); Miller and Daly, 1975); writing quality Richmond and Dickson-Markman (1985); Self-competence (Al-Ahmad, 2003); Daly and Witte, 1978).

**4.4 Strategies to Reduce Writing Apprehension**

The third research question: What are the strategies that the Jordanian Ph.D. students' employed to reduce writing apprehension when writing their Ph.D. thesis? To obtain the strategies that the students used, an understanding of the tactic is needed. In this study, a tactic is defined as a conscious and immediate response made by a participant to deal with writing apprehension experience when writing in English. After getting the responses from the participants, the strategies were classified based on their similarities.

Nine strategies emerged from this study. Table 4.6 displays the strategies that were used by the participants in this study. The researcher categorized these 9 strategies into four main themes. The first main theme was behaviour strategy which included preparation, technology programs, peer seeking, avoidance, and memorizing. The second main theme was expert review and feedback strategy which included guidance from supervisors, and professional expert of the language. The third main theme was cognitive strategy which included positive thinking (self-motivation). The last main theme was affective strategy which included relaxation. Table 4.6 displays the occurrences which denotes how many times the participants mentioned the strategy that they used to overcome apprehension in writing.

*Table 4.6 Strategies to Reduce Writing Apprehension*

| Theme | Sub-Theme | Occurrence |
|---|---|---|
| Behavior Strategy | *Preparation | 19 |
| | *Using Technology Programs | 11 |
| | *Peer Seeking | 10 |
| | *Avoidance | 5 |
| | *Memorizing | 2 |
| Expert Review and Feedback Strategy | *Guidance from Supervisors | 16 |
| | *Professional Expert of Language | 3 |
| Cognitive Strategy | *Positive Thinking "Self Motivation" | 2 |
| Affective Strategy | *Relaxation | 2 |

### 4.4.1 Behavior strategy

Behavior strategy was the most commonly used strategy by all the participants in this study to reduce writing apprehension when writing their PhD thesis in English. This theme could be divided into five sub-strategies.

### 4.4.1.1 Preparation

Preparation in this study was used as a strategy to reduce writing apprehension. Almost all of the participants (19 out of 21) mentioned that they used the preparation strategy in the process of writing their thesis in order to reduce writing apprehension. This preparation included reading more whether reading other articles, thesis or books, writing more whether writing papers, or rewrite their work, attending courses such as PhD training, intensive course in UUM, online courses, and also studying hard.

**4.4.1.1.1 Reading More**

The participants admitted that reading was a very important step to improve their writing in English, as well as to reduce the apprehension in writing. 17 participants out of 21 commented that they read as much as they could such as reading other articles, books and thesis. Participants 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, and 21 claimed that reading was one of the important strategies to reduce apprehension in writing. Participants such as 1, 8, and 15 believed that reading a lot was an important strategy to reduce apprehension in writing.

Reading theses and journals was an effective way to improve writing. Participants 2, 3, 7, 9, and 17 believed this strategy to be one way to reduce their apprehension in writing. Participant 4 gave a lengthy explanation on how he tried to improve his writing skill and reduce writing apprehension. He said:

> I always read other works especially articles to improve my writing. I was looked on how the authors can summarize the long sentences in a few words only. At the same time, I read other thesis at UUM library. I went there many times to have a looked on the structure of the thesis and the organizations of the thesis (Participant, 4).

Participant 14 mentioned that reading academic books helped him to improve his writing and he avoided the grammatical mistakes that he always did before. He commented:

> Using the English grammar books especially the TOFEL educational books that includes many rules and grammars (Participant, 14).

Even those who were majoring in Applied Linguistics programme such as participants 11, and 21 had the same view as the other participants by claiming that

reading was an important strategy to improve their writing skill and to reduce the apprehension in writing. Participant 11 said:

> Related to the missing of the sources and articles, I read more and more until I can get the information that what I want (Participant, 11).

Participant 21 stated that through reading process he improved his writing skill; otherwise, it might take longer time. He said:

> Reading reading and re-reading. If you read, you will improve, if your do not read, you will take long time to improve (Participant, 21).

### 4.4.1.1.2 Writing More

Furthermore, about half of the participants (11 out of 21) stated that writing a lot was a very important strategy to reduce writing apprehension whether rewriting their work, writing papers for journals or conferences and extra writing. Participants 3, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, and 19 claimed that this strategy helped them to decrease their apprehension in writing. Participants 3, 5 and 10 claimed that they tried to improve their writing by rewriting their original work a few times until they were satisfied with their work as well as their supervisors. By adopting this strategy, they believed that the apprehension in writing would be decreased. They said that "*I rewrite my work many times to get what I want. So, my apprehension is decreased*". Participants 7, 14, and 16 believed that writing for journals or international conferences was the best way to enhance the quality of their writing thesis because writing for journals as well as conferences have reviewers who can judge on your paper by accepting or rejecting it. Participant 14 commented that he tried to improve his writing by writing for journals and conferences. He published 9 papers in

journals and conferences. He admitted that this strategy really helped him to decrease the apprehension of writing. He said:

> I write papers for international and national conferences and journals provide a very good help for overcoming this challenge and problems in writing (Participant, 14).

Participant 11 who was majoring in Applied Linguistic had the same opinion as the other participants by claiming that writing more was the best way to reduce apprehension in writing and improve writing skill. He said:

> I was doing a practice until I improve my writing because writing needs a lot of vocabulary to use and grammars. So, I was write more until I improve my writing (Participant, 11).

### 4.4.1.1.3 Attending Courses

5 out of 21 participants claimed that attending some courses was another important strategy to overcome the apprehension in writing such as attending PhD training, intensive course in UUM, online courses, writing literature review and research methodology classes. Participants 3, 4, 5, 12, and 13 claimed that this strategy helped to decrease their apprehension in writing. These students mentioned that attending courses was really helpful at the beginning of the PhD process. Participant 3 attended a PhD training course. Participant 5 attended a course in UUM; for example, how to write a literature review. Participant 13 attended a research methodology class. Participant 12 said:

> I attended classes organized by the college on how to write a thesis, how to get a research problem, methodology classes and how to write a literature review to improve my writing. These courses are really helped me in writing my thesis because it is teached me how to write academically (Participant, 12).

Participant 4 said that he attended a few courses to improve his writing and to reduce his apprehension in writing such as intensive course in UUM and online courses. He said:

> Because I rarely write in English before I came to Malaysia. I graduated from Ukraine while the medium of instruction is in Russian language. So, I need a course to improve my writing. I already had an intensive course in UUM. But that course didn't focus on writing much. Also, the time for the course was too short. I already also had an online course to improve my writing. The teacher was from British (Participant, 4).

### 4.4.1.2 Using Technology Programs

The second sub-strategy which emerged from the study was using technology programs to reduce writing apprehension. This sub-strategy emerged from the main theme, Behavior strategy. Using technology programs means that participants try to improve their writing by using some technology programs such as Google translation, dictionaries and internet websites to improve their writing and to reduce writing apprehension. About half of the participants (11 out of 21) admitted that they used technology programs when writing in English. Participant 3 commented that he used on-line dictionaries, programmes to find the meaning of vocabularies whether from Arabic to English or from English to Arabic. He said:

> Using internet or Google to help me to translate the difficult meaning. I use some programmers such as الوافي (Participant, 3).

At the same time, participant 14 commented that he used Google translator to reduce writing apprehension and to improve his writing skill. He said:

> I use Google and Google translator to understand the correct meaning of the words. I translated the single words from English to Arabic only. Also, I use the dictionary provided by the Microsoft words which give you the synonyms and antonyms of the words and the correct

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usage for the words. I also use the dictionary especially the oxford dictionary for identifying the correct meaning for certain words (Participant, 14).

Participants 4, 5, 7, and 16 had the same view with the other participants by claiming that they used dictionaries and on-line programmes to reduce their apprehension in writing. Participant 4 said:

I used Google translation to translate paragraphs from Arabic to English or from English to Arabic to understand the meaning (Participant, 4).

Furthermore, participants 6 and 12 remarked that using online website was an official way to improve their writing and to decrease their apprehension in writing. Participant 6 said:

Improving my writing through using some available websites which are concerning on grammar, writing, the phrases to connect between the sentences (Participant, 6).

In addition, participant 12 said:

I open many websites on how to learn English in terms of vocabulary, grammar, writing and listening. Learn the grammar from websites (Participant, 12).

Participant 20 mentioned that he used the Microsoft word to reduce his grammatical errors. He said:

I use Microsoft word to fix some grammar or words, spellings (Participant, 20).

Participant 11 who was majoring in Applied Linguistics programme admitted that he used technologies to reduce writing apprehension. He explained how he improved his writing when he had problems with vocabulary, grammars and the conjunction words. He said:

> For the vocabulary part, I use the dictionary to check about the synonyms of the words because English words may have 2 or 3 different meaning. So, I was write the word and write beside it the synonyms to help me in paraphrasing. For grammars, I was check a website concerning in grammar such as WHITESMOKE. Also, I was reading the tense in grammar. The definition on it and when we can use it to use it in the right place in my writing. For the connecting words, I was used a website concerning in this matter also to see the proper used for them (Participant, 11).

### 4.4.1.3 Peer Seeking

Another behaviour strategy that was commonly used by the participants was peer seeking. In this study, about half of the participants (10 out of 21) mentioned that peer seeking was a strategy that they used to reduce writing apprehension. This means getting support or consulting peers or colleagues feedback in order to cope with writing apprehension. Some of the participants such as 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 11, 16, 17, and 20 admitted that they asked their friends to get feedback on what they had written, or to teach them how to write part of the thesis. Participant 7 thought that he would never write in a perfect way. He believed other people could help him write perfectly. He said:

> Sometimes, I feel it is difficult for me to write exactly perfect should to ask somebody to help me (Participant, 7).

Participant 4 commented that he showed his writing to those he trusted. He said:

> Sometimes I showed my work to close friends only because I can get a feedback from them because I trust on them. I didn't show my works to others because I don't trust others. I don't like to get a feedback from someone that I don't know (Participant, 4).

In line with the previous view, participant 11 who was majoring in Applied Linguistics programme, also sought help from his close friends. He commented:

> Sometime, I ask my friend who is doing a PhD in English language to check my writing. So, the feedback that I get from my friend or from my supervisor helped me too much. But I don't like to get a feedback from other friends who are not close with me because I feel shy to show my writing to others because when others read my writing with a lot of mistakes. Maybe they will get bad impression about you (Participant, 11).

Other participants such as 2, and 5 commented that they asked their friends to help them to write perfectly whether in writing style, or how to rewrite their work. Participant 2 said:

> Sometimes, I asked friends to know how to make the citation and using APA style (Participant, 2).

Participant 5 stated that he asked his friends to teach him how to rewrite his work. He said:

> I asked my friends to teach me how to rewrite the sentences (Participant, 5).

Participant 9 shared his experience of writing with the help from his colleagues in order to get feedback from the supervisor. He said:

> I have shared my work with my colleagues and PhD students and my supervisor to get a feedback (Participant, 9).

Participant 16 made similar comments. He said:

> Sometimes once you meet some friends we can share positive and negative experience of the PhD writing. Sometimes, we have a group for PhD students. So, we share our feeling sometimes. In addition, I share my experience with my supervisor whether difficulties to write, financial support, or the life in Malaysia (Participant, 16).

**4.4.1.4 Avoidance**

A few of the participants (5 out of 21) mentioned that avoidance was one of the behavior strategy that they used to reduce writing apprehension. In this study, avoidance means the steps taken by the participants to avoid the same mistakes. These participants mentioned that they learned from their own mistakes. For example, some of the participants mentioned that watching movies, listening to the news and talking with the foreigners decreased their level of writing apprehension. Participants 12, and 17 believed that learning from their own mistakes and avoiding the same mistakes were the best way to decrease writing apprehension. For example, participant 18 said:

> My experience of writing allows me to avoid the same mistakes. So, I learn from my mistakes (Participant, 18).

Listening to the news was mentioned by participant 12. It was an important strategy to decrease the apprehension of writing because by listening to the news or watching movies, one could increase the vocabulary that one needed. One could avoid some grammatical mistakes by hearing to the structure of it. Participant 12 said:

> I always listen to the news by English language to avoid some mistakes (Participant, 12).

An interesting idea was given by participant 14 whereby he described how he gained benefits from watching educational movies. He said:

> The most interesting tools for me which is watching movies especially with English sub-title which enhance my ability to read, listen, speak and to write in English and watching the educational movies for English language which is very beneficial for any one or any foreigner to learn the English language. For example, there is a UK series which is called Mind Your Language. It was very beneficial because it was combining a group of students from different nationalities all together with different accent of speaking English and different background which is very attractive and very helpful for learning English for any foreigner person (Participant, 14).

### 4.4.2 Expert Review and Feedback Strategy

The second main type of coping strategy derived from this study was expert review and feedback strategy. Most of the participants (17 out of 21) mentioned that expert review and feedback strategy was a very important strategy to reduce writing apprehension. Two sub-strategies which emerged from the participants' responses in this study were guidance from the supervisor and professional expert of the language.

### 4.4.2.1 Guidance from the Supervisors

Guidance from the supervisor was mentioned 17 times by the participants. The participants admitted that they received constructive feedbacks from their supervisors which decreased the level of their writing apprehension. Participants 3 and 16 admitted that their supervisors played a major role in solving the problems that they faced when writing their PhD thesis. In addition, participant 4 remarked that his supervisor was very helpful. He commented:

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> My supervisor help me to choose some article which is related to my work (Participant, 4).

In addition, participant 5 commented that he asked his supervisor to guide him in writing which decreased his apprehension of writing. He said:

> I keep asking my doctor how to write the thesis. So, he gives me the headlines for the thesis. For example, to start with introduction and how to get the problem. At the same time, my supervisor correction help me too much to write with the right way (Participant, 5).

In line with this view, participant 14 also believed that supervisors' comments was a very useful tool to decrease the apprehension in writing. He commented:

> My supervisor comments were very useful tool for enhancing and improving my ability in writing in English and in over to overcome those challenges in writing (Participant, 14).

Participant 21 who was majoring in Applied Linguistics programme also believed that his supervisor was very helpful. He said:

> I learn a lot from my supervisor because he graduated from an English speaking country for the three degrees, He has good pronunciation, good interaction. There was a good co-operation between me and him (Participant, 21).

Other participants such as 2, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 15, 17, 18 and 19 believed that supervisors could help their students to improve their writing and to produce high quality piece of papers. All the participants admitted that they followed their supervisors' advice to improve their writing, they kept contacting their supervisors, and they learned from their supervisors' and examiners' comments.

### 4.4.2.2 Professional Expert of the Language

The second sub-strategy which emerged from this strategy was professional expert of the language. This means that participants sent their papers to professional expert of the language to check their grammatical mistakes before submitting it for the defence or VIVA. Only 3 participants mentioned that this way helped them to reduce writing apprehension. Participant 10 said "*I make proof-reading at the expert*". In addition, participant 9 said:

> Asking someone to do a proof-reading for the whole work before my
> proposal defence (Participant, 9).

Participant 15 admitted that his supervisor asked him to do proof reading. He said:

> Actually, my supervise advised me to do paraphrasing and proof-
> reading for my work because I am not the one who write
> professionally in English. So, with technical writing I do it by myself
> but for basic English I should do it by assistant from others
> (Participant, 15).

### 4.4.3 Cognitive Strategy

The third strategy which emerged from this study was cognitive strategy. One sub-strategy derived from the participant' response was positive thinking "self-motivation". In this study, positive thinking means that the participants' used their mind to be confident when writing in English. Only two participants mentioned that positive thinking encouraged them to motivate themselves to write perfectly. Participant 3 tried to motivate himself to finish his writing because he was afraid he could not finish his writing on time. He commented:

> Sometimes I try to motivate myself such as I will say to myself at the
> end I will finish my work. So, be patient (Participant, 3).

A similar view was voiced out by participant 8, the participant gave a short response

when he explained using positive thinking. He said:

> I do self support to myself and encourage it by telling myself that do
> not scare of what I have written because I did well. Even, the
> correction will be helpful for me (Participant, 8).

### 4.4.4 Affective Strategy

One of the most important strategies that was highlighted in this study was affective

strategy. In this study, relaxation was derived from the participants' response as a

coping strategy. Coping strategy refers to the steps taken by the participants to relax

in order to cope with the feeling of writing apprehension. Only two participants

mentioned that they applied this strategy when they were experiencing a high level

of writing apprehension. Participant 3 admitted that once he had a high level of

writing apprehension, he tried going out to do another activity. He said:

> I play sport to release this attention and to come over the anxiety that I
> have (Participant, 3).

In addition, participant 15 commented similar idea:

> Actually, I know the feeling. So, when I start feel it again, I just go out
> because I think all students here feel the same thing. So, for me to
> release myself from this situation, I just go out and come back later
> and I try it again (Participant, 15).

To support information on writing apprehension experienced by the participants in

this study in relation to the strategies to overcome writing apprehension, interviews

with the supervisors shed some light. The supervisors suggested some strategies that

students should apply to overcome the apprehension of writing. Some of these

strategies are similar to those which were mentioned by the students while some others are new strategies such as:

1. Learn English well during their spare time.

2. Learn from other scholars on how to present ideas in writing.

3. Change the attitude and respect the culture of the society in which they are in.

4. Argue less, and show facts and information more.

5. Preparation.

6. Write more.

7. Read more on qualitative research.

8. Attend presentations for PhD students such as attending presentations at the proposal defence stages, attending mock VIVAs, attending training conducted by the University such as how to write literature review, attending workshops on writing, and attending research method class.

9. Submit the work to journals or conferences in order to get feedback from reviewers.

10. Work hard.

11. Discuss your work with the supervisor.

12. Follow your supervisor's advice.

13. Improving writing based on supervisor's comments.

14. Read a book on how to write scientific papers.

It has been found that most of the strategies mentioned by the supervisors are the same as the participants. There is no a big gap between what the supervisors believed and the participants believed about the strategies to reduce the apprehension of writing.

The third research question dealt with the strategies that students used to reduce their writing apprehension. The findings of this question showed that the Jordanian PhD students used four main strategies to reduce writing apprehension when writing their PhD thesis which were: Behaviour strategy, Expert review and feedback strategy, Cognitive strategy and Affective strategy. These four strategies are divided into: (1) Behaviour strategy consists of (i) preparation (ii) using technology programming such as Google translator, internet websites, and dictionaries, (iii) peer seeking, (iv) avoidance. Another strategy mentioned was (2) Expert review and feedback strategy which consists of 2 sub-strategies: (i) guidance from supervisor (ii) professional expert of the language. (3) Cognitive strategy consists of only one sub-strategy which is positive thinking "self-motivation". (4) Affective strategy consists of only one sub-strategy which is relaxation.

Most of the studies on writing apprehensions such as by Al-Ahmad (2003); Boice (1993); Fox (1980), Hanna (2010); Smith and Tighe (1987) found that teachers used different strategies to reduce students writing apprehension. Different strategies are used depend on culture, and level of apprehension. The postgraduate students' at King Saud University, Saudi Arabia used a few strategies to reduce their difficulties in writing such as 1- Writing an outline before writing a draft. 2- Including each of the three steps ( planning, writing, and revision) in their writing process. 3- Reviewing what they have written before submission (Al Fadda, 2012). In the present study, the Jordanian PhD students used similar strategies as the Saudi Arabia students because they share the same culture.

The strategies that the Jordanian PhD students used to reduce their writing apprehension when writing their PhD thesis are somewhat different from other studies. Reeves's (1997) study mentioned 17 strategies that the students used. Out of the 17 strategies that the students used to reduce writing apprehension, only three strategies are similar to the present study: writing more, published papers, comments from other students and teachers. A study done by Clark (2005) found 23 strategies that the students used to reduce their writing apprehension. Only 4 strategies are similar to this study: developing confidence in their writing ability or motivating, taking breaks, getting help and feedback, and try editing one's paper. However, the present study mentioned 17 strategies that the Jordanian PhD students used to reduce their writing apprehension. A study done by Mo (2012) among Chinese students suggested three strategies that the students should use to reduce writing difficulties which are motivation, integrating reading with writing, and get feedback from the teachers.

## 4.5 Conclusion

This chapter provides a summary of the research which contains the analysis of the data. More importantly, the researcher analyzed the interview data to answer the research questions of this study. Besides that, the researcher triangulated the main data in two ways: interviewing the supervisors and analyzing the documents. This chapter explained the causes of writing apprehension, the effects of writing apprehension and identified the strategies that the Jordanian PhD students used to reduce the apprehension of writing. The first research question dealt with the causes of writing apprehension among Jordanian PhD students. It was found that the Jordanian PhD students in UUM mentioned several causes of writing apprehension

when writing their PhD thesis such as: Lack of knowledge in English structure, Negative attitude toward writing, Negative writing experience in the past, and Inadequate knowledge in academic writing. The second research question dealt with the effects of writing apprehension. Three types of effects emerged from the students' answers: Personal effects, Social effects and Academic effects. The third research question focused on the strategies that the students used to reduce the apprehension of writing. The findings of this question showed that the Jordanian PhD students used four main strategies to reduce writing apprehension when writing their proposals in English: Behavior strategy, Expert review and feedback strategy, Cognitive strategy and Affective strategy.

# CHAPTER FIVE
# SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

## 5.1 Introduction

This chapter begins with a brief summary of this study followed by the discussion, the implications; limitations, recommendations for future research and lastly the conclusion.

## 5.2 Summary

The purpose of this study was to understand the writing apprehension phenomenon from the Jordanian PhD students' perspectives. Revisiting the research objectives, this study was undertaken to seek answers to several research questions which are: (1) What are the causes of the Jordanian Ph.D. students' writing apprehension when writing their Ph.D. thesis? (2) What are the effects of the Jordanian Ph.D. students' writing apprehension when writing their Ph.D. thesis? (3) What are the strategies that the Jordanian Ph.D. students' employed to reduce writing apprehension when writing their Ph.D. thesis? The objectives of this study were: (1) To explore the causes of Jordanian Ph.D. students' writing apprehension when writing their Ph.D. thesis in Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM). Since this apprehension, specific to writing, has been found to affect writing skills and self-concept, especially when writing for thesis, it is an important issue to study because little research has been conducted in

this area, especially the causes of writing apprehension. (2) This study aims to explain the effects of writing apprehension from the Jordanian Ph.D. students when writing their Ph.D. thesis. The second objective is important and necessary in view of the growing emphasis on writing thesis. Very few research have studied the effects of writing apprehension among EFL/ESL context. (3) It intends to identify the strategies that the Jordanian Ph.D. students' employed to reduce writing apprehension when writing their Ph.D. thesis.

The logical reasons for this study are explained. First, most of the have investigated writing apprehension through quantitative methodology using Daly and Miller's (1975) questionnaire. However, this study is a qualitative study on writing apprehension. Second, most studies have been done through undergraduate students' perspective while this study is focused on PhD students' perspective. Third, this study is focused on writing apprehension through students' perspectives while most studies have studied writing apprehension through teachers' perspective. Fourth, Limited number of studies have been done on EFL/ESL contexts especially on Arab context such as Jordanian because most of the studies have been done on native language. Fifth, very limited number of studies have been done on Jordanian PhD students who are studying abroad. Sixth, this studied is focused on all programs including English program while other studies have studied writing apprehension on English program only. Seventh, limited number of studied have been done on the causes of writing apprehension, effects of writing apprehension and strategies that students use to overcome the apprehension of writing.

This study employed qualitative case study while the participants were 21 Jordanian PhD students at UUM. The sampling of this study was purposive sampling while the researcher selected homogeneous sampling strategy. The researched collected the data through face to face interview with the participants. Data from analysis of the document and interviewing the supervisors were used to triangulate the students' interview data.

The findings of this study revealed the causes of writing apprehension, the effects of writing apprehension and identified the strategies that the Jordanian PhD students use to reduce the apprehension of writing. The first research question dealt with the causes of writing apprehension among Jordanian PhD students. It was found that the Jordanian PhD students in UUM faced several causes of writing apprehension when writing their PhD thesis such as: Lack of knowledge in English structure, negative attitude toward writing, negative writing experience in the past, and inadequate knowledge in academic writing.

The first main theme which emerged from this study was lack of knowledge in English structure. It is divided into three sub-themes as what mentioned by the responses: Problems with coherence (Writing flow, unrelated sentences, repetition, conjunction words, and sentence length), Problems in mechanism of writing (Grammar, reporting verbs, punctuation, spelling, paraphrasing, and capital letters), and limited vocabulary. The study highlights internal and external factors which contribute to writing apprehension.

The second main theme which emerged was negative attitude toward writing. This theme is divided into two sub-themes: lack of motivation to write in English, and fear of evaluation.

The third main theme which emerged from this study was negative writing experience in the past. This main theme was divided into two sub-themes: less practice in English, and thinking in Arabic and then translating into English.

The fourth main theme derived from this study was inadequate knowledge in academic writing. This theme was emerged into two sub-themes: (1) Weak in writing the PhD proposal such as writing the introduction chapter (Chapter One), writing the literature review chapter (Chapter Two) and writing the methodology chapter (Chapter Three). (2) Problems with writing style.

The second research question dealt with the effects of writing apprehension. Three types of effects emerged from the students' answers: personal effects, social effects and academic effects. The first effect was personal effect which consists of three sub-themes: anxiety, health problems, and depression. The social effect was discovered to be related to the interaction between the Jordanian PhD students and their supervisors or the interaction between the students and the society. It has two sub-themes which were isolation and embarrassing. The last effects found in this study were academic effects which led to low academic performance.

Research question three focused on the strategies that students use to reduce the apprehension of writing. The findings of this question showed that the Jordanian PhD students used 4 main strategies to reduce writing apprehension when writing their proposals in English: behavior strategy, expert review and feedback strategy, cognitive strategy and affective strategy. Behavior strategy consists of (1) Preparation (2) Using technology programming such as Google translator, internet websites, and dictionaries, (3) Peer seeking, and (4) Avoidance. Expert review and feedback strategy consists of 2 sub-strategies which were (1) Guidance from the supervisors (2) Professional expert of the language. Cognitive strategy consists of only one sub-strategy: positive thinking "self motivation". Affective strategy consists of only one sub-strategy: relaxation.

## 5.3 Implications of this Study

This study has provided the researcher with a better understanding of writing apprehension among the Jordanian PhD students in UUM. The implications of this study are divided into two main parts which are implications for learners and implications for supervisors.

### 5.3.1 Implications for the Learners

These are some implications of writing apprehension for the learners. First of all, students should realize that apprehension in writing is different from one student to another for example, some students compare themselves with the other PhD students' ability. This comparison is not realistic because the level of apprehension from one student to another ranges from high, moderate or low level. The researcher

observed that students who obtained a master degree from Malaysia were less apprehensive than those who obtained their master degree from another country such as Jordan and Iraq. For example, some students who obtained a master degree from Jordan communicate less with their supervisor because of their high level of apprehension while other students who obtained a master degree from UUM were less apprehensive. So, this study hopes that the students will believe on their ability to produce a very good paper.

Students should believe that making mistakes while writing the PhD thesis is part of the learning process because some students almost gave up when they were facing some difficulties to write their PhD thesis such as finding the gap of the research. Another implication is that by discovering the causes of writing apprehension among the Jordanian PhD students in UUM will help learners to become aware of the causes of writing apprehension.

In addition, students should also understand that there are two types of effect on the apprehension of writing which are negative affect which can hinder the students' performance and positive affect which can motivate the students' to perform well in the target language. For example, some students mentioned that they were thinking of quitting their studies and go back home to further their PhD in Jordan because they were having difficulties to write in English language which had increased their level of writing apprehension at the beginning of the study. Another implication is that by identifying some strategies that students can use to reduce writing

apprehension while writing PhD thesis, the students can become self-directed learners, by adopting, modifying, and applying these strategies.

**5.3.2 Implications for the Supervisors**

Supervisors play an important role to decrease the apprehension of writing among PhD students. One student mentioned that he preferred to do his work in a group. Supervisor can make their supervisees work in a group because it can be a good way to decrease their level of apprehension because students can share their knowledge, and experience. At the same time, they can correct themselves.

One important implication is that supervisors should be aware of the causes of students writing apprehension. This study provides some causes that Jordanian PhD students have while writing their PhD thesis. Supervisors should be aware of this case. At the same time, supervisors should help students to decrease their writing apprehension by suggesting to them some strategies to overcome their apprehension of writing. It is hoped that the strategies that the PhD students used to reduce writing apprehension, can help supervisors guide their postgraduate students in reducing writing apprehension.

Another implication is that supervisors should be aware of the cultural differences between Jordanian culture and Malaysian culture. Both should try to understand each other. For example, some supervisors mentioned that Jordanian and Arabian students were very demanding students because they always said they wanted to do this or that without understanding the other point of view. Another example is that some

students said that they felt shy to communicate freely with female supervisors because of the cultural differences.

## 5.4 Limitations of the Study

One limitation that the researcher faced was difficulty collecting the data because some supervisors were unwilling to be interviewed because they were very busy with appointments, conferences and other work. The researcher managed to interview 9 supervisors who supervised 11 PhD students only from a total of 18 supervisors and 21 students. At the same time, the students were unwilling to share their proposals to be documented in this study. Only 9 proposals were analyzed from the total number which is 21 proposals because the PhD students were worried about the originality of their work. Lastly, the researcher did not interview any female Jordanian PhD students in UUM because at that time no female Jordanian PhD student was studying in UUM.

## 5.5 Recommendations for Future Research

There are many opportunities for further research concerning writing apprehension and postgraduate students. Based on the findings of this study, these are some recommendations for further research. First of all, this study is done among Jordanian PhD students who are studying abroad and a very limited number of studies have been done on Jordanian students. The researcher recommends that more studies should be done on Jordanian postgraduate students to compare the results of these research questions especially on causes, and effects. Next, the researcher recommends for more studies on the strategies that students use to overcome the

apprehension of writing. A comparison between the strategies that students use and the strategies that the lecturers think students should use can be done. In addition, the researcher recommends identifying the strategies that students use based on their level of apprehension in writing.

Another recommendation is to conduct a similar study across different institutions and/or across other disciplines. It is important to mention that the number of case studies was very small and bound to one institution. The sample was also very much gender-oriented as most of the interviewees were men.

Finally, the participants of this study admitted that they had problem with communicating with female supervisors at the beginning of their PhD study because of shyness or cultural aspect. More studies should investigate the relationship between writing apprehension and shyness factor.

**5.6 Conclusion**

This chapter presents the objectives of the study, justifications for the study, the methodology used, and summary of the findings. More importantly, the implications of this research are discussed in two main parts: implications for the learners and implications for the supervisors. The limitations of the study and the recommendations for future research are also discussed.

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