# THE WRITING ATTITUDE OF HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS

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## ABSTRACT

*Writing attitude plays an important role in forming our view towards writing skill. Writing attitude is highly effective on improving or hindering writing achievement. Students with positive attitudes performed significantly better than those with negative attitudes on writing task. Writing attitude affects writing quality. Thus, the main objective of this study was to measure writing attitude of higher education students with reference to their gender, social class, category, and area of residence, discipline of the study, parental educational status and known languages. Survey method was used in this study. All the post graduate level students of Gujarat Vidyapith were the population of the study. 346 students were selected by random cluster method. Four point Likert type Dhadhodara & Joshi (2017) writing attitude scale was applied.The findings revealed that only 15.89 % students had positive attitude towards writing. There was no significant difference in writing attitude in the context of students' gender, social class category, discipline of the study, parental educational status and languages known. There was significant difference in writing attitude in the context of students' area of residence.*

*Key Words :Measurement, Higher Education, Writing attitude, Comparison*
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## INTRODUCTION

Writing attitude is defined by Graham et al (2007, pp 518) as 'an affective disposition involving how the act of writing makes the author feel, ranging from happy to unhappy.' In other words, the more positive attitude students have towards writing, the more energy they spend on the task. The relationship between writing attitude and academic achievement has received rather little attention in the field of education because writing attitude is highly effective on improving or hindering writing achievement (Bartscher, Lawler, Ramirez and Schinault, 2001).

Number of studies showed the direct link between attitude and success, and one of them was conducted by Sarkhoush (2013), which revealed that those learners with positive attitudes performed significantly better than those with negative attitudes on writing tasks. The study of Paker and Erarslan (2015) revealed that the students'attitude towards writing skill had a positive effect on their proficiency in writing. Ni'mah et al also stated that there was a significantly positive correlation between attitude towards writing and learners' writing performance.

Many researches revealed that attitude plays an important role to initiate, stop, stall or continue the flow of human activity. Attitude towards writing would affect academic achievement of higher education students, especially in the Indian universities, students need to perform the majority of their academic tasks in written form. Many previous researches asserted that positive attitude and interest towards writing may enhance students' writing skills and performance and bring success to the students' overall academic and possibly future career achievements (Sullivan 2006, Osman and Bakar, 2009).The present study, therefore, aims at finding out higher education students' attitudes towards the writing in the context of Indian culture.

**Objectives of the Study**

1. To measure writing attitude of higher education students.

2. To compare writing attitude of higher education students in the context of their subjects.

3. To examine writing attitude of higher education students in the context of their gender, social class category, area of residence, discipline of the study, parental educational status and languages known.

**Hypotheses of the Study**

Keeping in mind above mentioned objectives following null hypotheses were formulated:

$H_{01}$ There will be no significant difference between mean scores obtained on writing attitude scale by the male and female higher education students.

$H_{02}$ There will be no significant difference between mean scores obtained on writing attitude scale by the general and reserve class category higher education students.

$H_{03}$ There will be no significant difference between mean scores obtained on writing attitude scale by the urban and rural higher education students.

$H_{04}$ There will be no significant difference among mean scores obtained on writing attitude scale by the higher education students of social science, science and language disciplines.

$H_{05}$ There will be no significant difference between mean scores obtained on writing attitude scale by the higher education students having literate parents and those having illiterate parents.

$H_{06}$ There will be no significant difference between mean scores obtained on writing attitude scale by the higher education students who know mother tongue only and those who know other languages also.

**Operational Definition of the Terms**

**Higher Education Students**. The students of post graduate departments of Gujarat Vidyapith, Ahmedabad were considered as higher education students.

**Writing Attitude.** The total score obtained on writing attitude scale by the student was considered as writing attitude of that student.

**Delimitation of the Study**

The study was delimited to the students of post-graduate departments of Gujarat Vidyapith only.

**Population and Sampling**

All the post-graduate students studying

during the year 2016-17 in Gujarat Vidyapith were the population of the study. First of all, a list of post-graduate departments of Gujarat Vidyapith was prepared. Each department was running two-year post graduate programmes. Using lottery method, the class (year) was selected for the sample. All the students, who were present at the time of data collection in the selected class were included in the sample. Thus, the random cluster sampling technique was used. Table-1 shows the characteristics of the sample.

**Table-1**
**Characteristics of the Sample**

| No | Characteristics | Total | | Grand Total | Total |
|----|-----------------|-------|---|-------------|-------|
| 1 | Gender | Male | | 196 | 346 |
| | | Female | | 150 | |
| 2 | Social class category | General | | 54 | 346 |
| | | Reserve | | 292 | |
| 3 | Area of residence | Urban | | 56 | 346 |
| | | Rural | | 290 | |
| 4 | Discipline of the study | Social Science | | 245 | 346 |
| | | Science | | 54 | |
| | | Language | | 47 | |
| 5 | Parental educational status | Illiterate | | 282 | 346 |
| | | Literate | | 64 | |
| 6 | Languages known | Mother tongue only | | 295 | 346 |
| | | Other languages | | 51 | |

Table-1 shows that total 346 students were in the sample of the study. Among the 346 students,196 students were female and 150 students were male; 54 students were from general class category and 292 students were from reserve social class category; 56 students were from urban area and 290 students were from rural area. 245 students were from the social science discipline, 54 students were from the science discipline and 47 students were from the language discipline. Among the 346 students, there were 282 students whose parents were illiterate and 64 students whose parents were literate; there were 295 students who knew mother tongue only and 51 students who knew other languages also.

**Tool of the Study**

**Writing Attitude Scale.** A four point Likert type Dhadhodara & Joshi (2017) writing attitude scale was applied for collecting data. There were 10 items for measuring 4 factors. Out of these ten items, five items were positive and five items were negative. Each item had four options indicating the degrees of agreement. The degrees of agreement were 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree'. The respondent had to tick mark (") one of the suitable options. The reliability of the tool  was

established using three methods: Cronbach's Alpha value was 0.68 , Spearman Brown Coefficient value was 0.58 and Guttman Split Half Coefficient value was 0.51. As well as Cliffs Consistency Indice– 'C' value was 0.39 which showed validity of the tool in terms of its unidimentionality.

## Data Collection and Analysis

The writing attitude scale was administered to collect data in a normal classroom condition. The respondents were given guidance regarding the way of responding the items. There was no time limit for responding. After data collection, the researcher proceeded to data analysis according to objectives and hypotheses. Descriptive analysis and t-test and F-test were employed to analyze the data.

## Results

Based on the scores on writing attitude scale,the Mean, Median and Mode were respectively 18.99, 19 and 18, while standard deviation was 4.368 and Variance was 19.078. The value of skewness was -0.427. It shows slightly negative skewness of the data. It means the frequency of the high scorer were more than that of the low scorer in respect of mean score of the data on writing attitude scale. So it concluded that the level of writing attitude of higher education students was high and fairly above than the average score. Standard error of skewness was 0.131 and kurtosis was 0.602; standard error of Kurtosis was 0.261. This indicated that the frequency of distribution was almost normal. Histogram of obtained scores frequency distribution on writing attitude scale is presented as Figure-1.
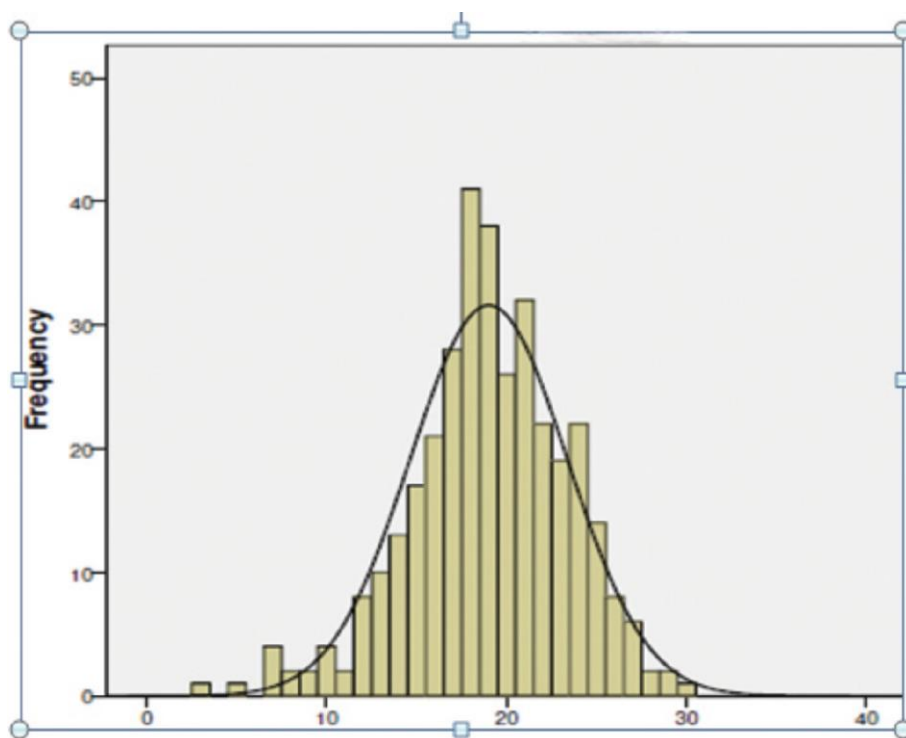


**Figure-1**
**Histogram of Obtained Scores Frequency Distribution On**
**Writing Attitude Scale**

The first objective of the research was to measure writing attitude of higher education students. The maximum possible score on writing attitude scale was 30 (10 x 3). The obtained minimum and maximum score were 3 and 30, respectively. To categorize the negative, moderate and positive writing attitude of students, Mean +/- sd formula was applied. The results are presented in Table – 2.

**Table – 2**
**Higher Education Students' Writing Attitude**

| No | Writing attitude | Score | N | Percentage |
|----|------------------|-------|---|------------|
| 1 | Low | < 14.622 | 47 | 13.58% |
| 2 | Moderate | 14.622 to 23.358 | 244 | 70.52% |
| 3 | High | >23.358 | 55 | 15.89% |

Table – 2 shows that 13.58 % students had low; 70.52% students had moderate and 15.89 % students had high attitudes towards writing. The results revealed that most of the students had moderate writing attitude. Graphical presentation of the results is shown as Figure-2
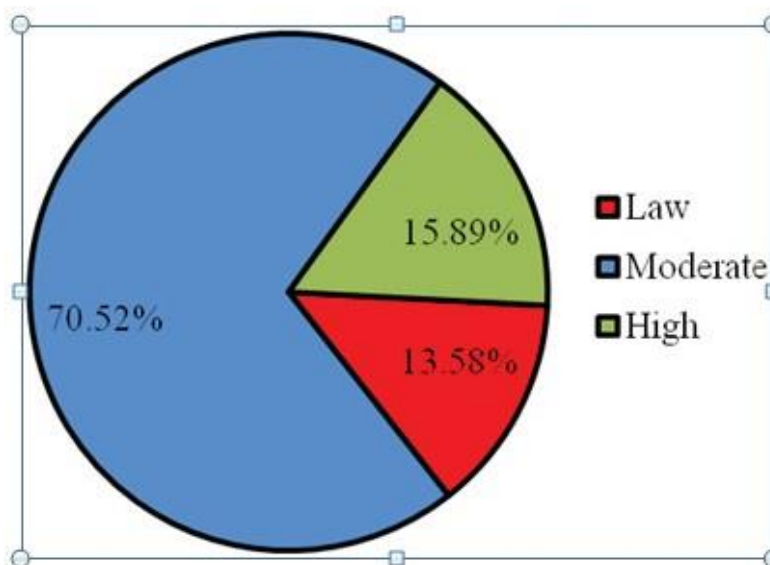


**Figure-2**
**Higher Education Students' Writing Attitude Categories**

The second objective of the research was to compare the scores of the higher education students writing attitude in the context of their subjects. The subject wise mean scores are presented in Table – 3.
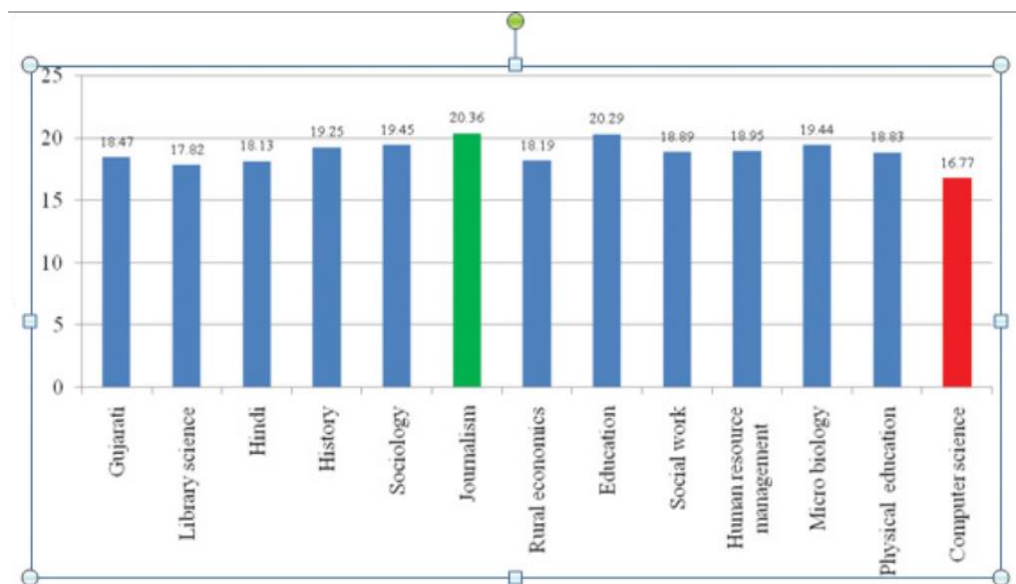
**Table - 3**
**Subject Wise Mean Values Based On Writing Attitude Scale**

| No. | Subject | N | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Gujarati | 32 | 18.47 |
| 2 | Library science | 11 | 17.82 |
| 3 | Hindi | 15 | 18.13 |
| 4 | History | 32 | 19.25 |
| 5 | Sociology | 40 | 19.45 |
| 6 | Journalism | 11 | 20.36 |
| 7 | Rural economics | 43 | 18.19 |
| 8 | Education | 41 | 20.29 |
| 9 | Social work | 35 | 18.89 |
| 10 | Human resource management | 20 | 18.95 |
| 11 | Micro biology | 41 | 19.44 |
| 12 | Physical education | 12 | 18.83 |
| 13 | Computer science | 13 | 16.77 |
| | **Total** | **34** | **618.83** |

Table - 3 shows that there were 346 students in 13 subjects. The mean score of 346 students for writing attitude was 18.30. Among the 13 subjects the journalism students scored highest (20.36) while the students of computer science scored the lowest (16.77) on the writing attitude scale. Figure-2 shows the graphical presentation of these results.



**Figure – 2 : Subject Wise Mean Values Based On Writing Attitude Scale**

## Hypotheses Testing

The results of the hypotheses testing are presented in Table - 4

### Table - 4
### Summary of the Results of the Hypotheses Testing

| Variable | Strata | N | Mean | Std. Dev. | Mean Diff | t-value | df | Sig level |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | Female | 196 | 19.20 | 4.270 | 0.484 | 1.022 | 344 | N.S. |
| | Male | 150 | 18.72 | 4.492 | | | | |
| **Social class category** | General | 54 | 19.28 | 4.924 | 0.336 | 0.519 | 344 | N.S. |
| | Reserve | 292 | 18.94 | 4.264 | | | | |
| **Area of residence** | Urban | 56 | 17.86 | 5.150 | 1.376 | 2.164 | 344 | 0.01* |
| | Rural | 290 | 19.23 | 4.182 | | | | |
| **Parental Educational Status** | Illiterate | 282 | 19.18 | 4.380 | 0.990 | 1.641 | 344 | N.S. |
| | Literate | 64 | 18.19 | 4.253 | | | | |
| **Languages known** | Mother tongue only | 295 | 19.14 | 4.523 | 1.081 | 1.636 | 344 | N.S. |
| | Other languages also | 51 | 18.06 | 3.196 | | | | |

**\* Significant at 0.01 level**

Table - 4 shows that there were 196 female and 150 male students. Means were 19.20 and 18.72; standard deviations were 4.270 and 4.492 respectively for male and female students. Mean difference was 0.484 and t-value was 1.022. The calculated t-value was less than the table value. Therefore the null hypothesis was not rejected. There was no significant difference in writing attitude of higher education students in the context of their gender.

Table - 4 shows that there were 54 and 292 from general and reserve social class category students, respectively Means were 19.28 and 18.94; standard deviations were 4.924 and 4.264 respectively for general and reserve social class category students. Mean difference was 0.336 and t-value was 0.519. The calculated value was less than table value. Therefore the null hypothesis was not rejected. There was no significant difference in writing attitude of higher education students in the context of their social class category.

Table - 4 shows that there were 56 and 290 from urban and rural area students. Means were 17.86 and 19.23; standard deviation were 5.150 and 4.182 respectively for urban and rural area students. Mean difference was 1.376 and t-value was 2.164. The calculated value was greater than table value. Therefore the null hypothesis was not accepted. There was significant difference in writing attitude of higher education students in the context of area of residence. Rural area students had more positive attitude towards writing than urban area students.

Table – 4 shows that there were 282 students whose parents were illiterate and 64 students whose parents were literate. Means were 19.18 and 18.19; standard deviations were 4.380 and 4.253 respectively for students having illiterate parents and students having literate parents. Mean difference was 0.990 and t-value was 1.641. The calculated value was less than table value. Therefore the null hypothesis was not rejected. There was no significant difference in writing attitude of higher education students in the context of their parental educational status.

Table - 4 shows that there were 295 students who knew mother tongue only and 51 students who knew other languages also. Means were 19.14 and 18.06; standard deviations were 4.523 and 3.196 respectively for students who know mother tongue only and students who know other languages also. Mean difference was 1.081 and t-value was 1.636. The calculated value was less than the table value. Therefore the null hypothesis was not rejected. There was no significant difference in writing attitude of higher education students in the context of the number of their known languages.

The results of the fourth hypothesis testing are presented in Table - 5

**Table - 5**
**Descriptive Statistics for the Fourth Hypothesis**

| Discipline | N | Mean | Std. Dev. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Social science | 245 | 19.16 | 4.010 |
| Science | 54 | 18.80 | 5.631 |
| Language | 47 | 18.36 | 4.547 |

Table - 5 shows that there were 245 students of social science, 54 students of science and 47 students of language. Means were 19.16, 18.80 and 18.36; standard deviation were 4.010, 5.631 and 4.547 respectively for social science, science and language students. Relationship between writing attitude and discipline of the study is presented in table – 6.

**Table - 6**
**Relationship between Writing Attitude and Discipline of the Study**

| Source of Variance | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Squares | F-value | Sig level |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between groups | 27.586 | 2 | 13.793 | 0.722 | N.S. |
| Within groups | 6554.402 | 343 | 19.109 | | |
| **Total** | **6581.988** | **345** | | | |

Table-6 shows that Sum of squares between groups was 27.586 and within groups was 6554.402. Mean squares between groups was 13.793 and within groups was 19.109. F-value was 0.722. The calculated value was less than the table value. Therefore the null hypothesis was not rejected. There was no significant difference in writing attitude of higher education

students in the context of their discipline.

## Discussion

The results of the research show that 13.58 % students had low; 70.52% students had moderate and 15.89 % students had high attitudes towards writing. The results revealed that most of the students had moderate writing attitude. That is a good sign for university academicians. Moderate attitude towards writing leads to more participation in writing tasks. They like to participate in writing related activities or tasks and results in the student's academic achievement or a writing achievement. It may boost students' writing skill also. So, the teachers have to give continuous positive reinforcement to all students for their written expression. Various activities, related to free writing for higher education students, be organized. The importance of writing in the life and in the career should be explained to all the students periodically.

On the writing attitude scale, the journalism students scored the highest (20.36) while the students of computer science scored the least (16.77). The students in the sample were studying at the post graduate level. It can be inferred that computer science students might be habituated to write with the keyboard rather than the pen or pencil. The medium of instruction is English in the department of Computer Science and they were asked to write in Gujarati in the present research. Moreover, computer users do not bother much about the grammatical aspects of written language. That makes students more anxious in a deliberate writing exercise. On the other hand, the students of the Journalism department scored more. It may be because they have a regular practice of writing.

There was no significant difference in writing attitude in the context of students' gender, social class category, discipline of the study, parental educational status and languages known. These results are in the line of the results of Cunningham's (2009) study. Finding of the study by Pakerand Erarslan (2015) also concluded that gender had no influence on the attitudes of students towards writing.

The results of this research also indicate that there was a significant difference in writing attitude in the context of students' area of residence. The students of rural area had more positive attitude towards writing than those of urban area. So it is very important to conduct a research on such issues. Further research may be conducted to find out the reasons of low attitude of urban area students towards writing.

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