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Exploring the Relationship Between Creativity and Narrative Writing Proficiency of Pakistani Undergraduate ESL Learners

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Abstract:
The study aimed to explore the relationship between creativity and narrative writing proficiency level among ESL undergraduate learners of a public sector university in central Punjab, Pakistan. The study adopted a version of Torrance Test of Creative Thinking (TTCT) as a framework. TTCT and IELTS written test rubrics were utilized for analysing the data of 30 participants. The primary objective of the study was to measure the level of creativity exhibited in the narrative writing and its relationship with English proficiency. A significant positive relationship (r = .84) was found between creativity and narrative writing proficiency using Pearson's correlation coefficient. The results showed that the students who demonstrated higher level of creativity also exhibited stronger writing proficiency levels. To compare the results, a paired sample t-test was used to confirm, and it was found that there was a significant difference between the scores of writing test and creativity. The effect of gender was also investigated, and females outperformed male participants. The study emphasized the importance of fostering creativity in narrative writing instructions to improve writing abilities among ESL learners. The study suggested that educators and institutions should integrate creative writing exercises and techniques into language instructions, acknowledging the potential advantages of increasing students' imaginative abilities to improve their language proficiency.

Keywords: *Creativity, Narrative writing, Torrance Test of Creative Thinking (TTCT), ESL proficiency, undergraduate level, Pearson correlation.*

I**ntroduction**:

English as a second language (ESL) speakers are striving to communicate and convey their ideas creatively in the context of English as a global language. In this context, creativity is considered inevitable for innovation, novelty and sustenance (Kaplan, 2019). People from different social classes bring innovative ideas on an international platform by using their knowledge and critical thinking skills. However, the ESL learners face many challenges in productive skills like writing. In Pakistan, although English being the official language is promoted in educational institution and is a compulsory subject at all levels, however the ESL learners find it difficult to communicate in English language. These ESL learners struggle to gain mastery by using many social media platforms, movies, language learning apps and practicing it in their academics as it is a medium of communication in educational institutions. In language learning, creativity plays a vital role in improving the learning experience. Dornyei and Otto (1998) explain that learners must engage in the recovery and development of their thoughts to enhance their understanding. Similarly, Sternberg (2012) states that "creativity involves imagination, flexibility, risk-taking, and the ability to create new classifications and systems of knowledge, all of which significantly impact learning a foreign language". When students are encouraged to generate innovative ideas and provided with a structured approach, their motivation and attention are greatly enhanced. This approach promotes active thinking and exploration, leading to improved language skills and fluency. Ultimately, fostering creativity in language learning creates an engaging classroom environment that nurtures critical thinking, linguistic abilities, and overall language proficiency.

Narrative writing is a type of writing that has sequential based events (Chahyani & Nurjanah, 2019). Hence, creativity is the origination of original and innovative ideas which are expressed by writing. Where, writing proficiency demonstrates the language knowledge, and ability to write effectively with strong command on vocabulary, grammar, structure and organization of ideas by maintaining coherence.

In narrative writing, creativity plays a significant role. However, there are many other factors effecting the writing of ESL learners and proficiency level is one of them. Narrative writing provides an opportunity to highlight their creativity through story writing. It allows ESL learners to express their thoughts, emotions and experiences. ESL learners from diverse linguistic, geographical and educational backgrounds possess varying levels of proficiency in the English language. These proficiency levels provide a framework for understanding learners' language abilities and guide instructional strategies. The different levels of writing skills are often categorized as beginner, intermediate, and advanced learners. For beginner-level ESL learners, creativity in narrative writing involves encouraging the use of simple vocabulary and sentence structures to tell imaginative stories. As learners progress to

intermediate levels, expanding vocabulary, incorporating descriptive language, and experimenting with different story structures become key aspects of nurturing their creative writing abilities. The advanced-level ESL learners are encouraged to think critically, use figurative language, and explore narrative techniques to create sophisticated and compelling narratives.

The purpose of the current study is to examine the connection between writing ability and creativity, as well as the influence of gender on these relationships as the lack of creativity in ESL classroom hinders the proficiency of students. By examining the writing samples of the learners, the writing patterns, strategies, and creative skills along with writing competence of the ESL learners can be identified. As in Pakistan, creative writing is promoted in primary and secondary classes to some extent both in private and public school. But, as soon as the students approach the board examination their creativity is hindered by forcing Punjab Textbook Board (PTB) syllabus and promoting cramming from different guidebooks. By exploring this relationship, the study seeks to establish the importance of incorporating creative writing exercises and techniques in ESL language instruction. Therefore, to study these influences this study is employed on undergraduate level. The study adopted the creativity model, developed by Torrance (1965) which is the most significant model to test creativity skills at different levels from kindergarten to graduate level. Because of the study's limited sample size and inapplicability of the findings to a larger population, this study has certain limitations.

Literature Review:

Review of previous studies related to creativity and writing proficiency provided significant insights. Narrative writing is considered one of best writing technique to test creative skills as it is a process of communicating thoughts, meanings, and unique ideas to the readers by constructing stories. In this context, various educationists propose different perspectives of creativity in narrative writing. Creativity is defined by Boden as "the ability to come up with new ideas that are surprising yet intelligible, and also valuable in some way" (2001, p. 95). It is the innovation of unique ideas which come by observation. Another researcher, Wallas (1926) proposed a different concept by stating that "happy ideas came unexpectedly without effort, like an inspiration". Eindhoven and Vinacke (1952) provided an alternative definition. He used the phrase "dynamic blend of process that co-occurs in a recursive way throughout the work" to define the process of creativity. In narrative writing, creative ideas are utilized. Creativity is a psychological construct, and it is most related with the genre of narration. In narrative writing, creative thinking skills are involved to develop a story line having event in sequence. There are many factors that affect the level of creativity in writing and proficiency level is one of them.

English as a second language (ESL) leaners rarely write for vocational purposes, rather they

write more for academic purposes. Although steps are being taken to improve creative writing skills in Pakistan there must be creative thinking and decision-making element in the students (Tezak, 2015). Exploring the factors effecting the writing skills of ESL learners is one of the most crucial things for researchers, students, teachers, educators, and syllabus designers as well.

A scientific study by Guilford in 1950 stated that "cognitive processes involved creativity and the prime cognitive process is divergent thinking" (Guilford, 1950, 1959). The type of genres that were generally considered in creative writing were essays, novels, short stories, and poetry etc. To assess the creative writing skills of students the most common narrative writing was short story (Kaufman et al., 2013).

A study by Johnson et al. (2023) investigated the correlation between creativity and writing proficiency among middle school students. A positive correlation was found between the scores of creativities and writing proficiency in the findings of the research. However, the shortcomings of the study informed that it relied solely on self-reported measures of creativity and did not consider other potentially influential factors such as motivation or socioemotional aspects of writing.

In contrast, another study by Smith and Brown (2019) employed a comprehensive approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. The study explored the cognitive and socioemotional factors associated with creativity in narrative writing. The findings suggested that cognitive abilities, such as fluency of ideas and flexibility of thinking, significantly predicted creativity in narrative writing. Additionally, socioemotional factors, including motivation and self-efficacy, performed a significant part in promoting creativity. However, the study had a small sample size and focused on a specific age group, limiting the generalizability of the findings.

In 2015, Tezak conducted a study on "creative thinking and decision-making processes in EFL creative writing". Think-aloud protocol was adopted and only two third year undergraduates participated in this research and students were assigned a picture prompt for creative writing. The study adopted the basic stage model of creative process which includes "task identification, preparation, response generation, and response validation and communication" (Amabile, 1996). Numerous studies have been conducted on identification of the significance of creativity in narrative writing in Europe and USA, however, in Asia the curriculum and teaching strategies should aim to develop more creative skills in learners and teachers.

The study conducted by Runco and Acar (2012) explored the relationship between creativity and writing performance among college students. They found a significant positive correlation between creative thinking abilities and writing quality, suggesting that individuals with higher creative thinking abilities tended to produce more innovative and engaging written texts.

However, it is crucial to focus on the self-report measures of creative thinking abilities and subjective evaluations of writing quality, employed by the researcher in this study which might lead to potential biases. Additionally, the specific statistical values or effect sizes were not provided, limiting the extent to which the strength of the correlation could be assessed. Future research incorporating objective measures and a more diverse participant sample would help strengthen the generalizability of the findings.

Similarly, Plucker et al. (2004) examined the relationship between creativity and writing proficiency at elementary school levels. They utilized a standardized test to measure creativity and employed a scoring rubric to assess writing quality. The results indicated a significant positive correlation between creativity scores and writing proficiency, suggesting that students with higher creativity levels tended to produce more skilled and imaginative writing. While this study provided valuable evidence, it was important to acknowledge that the use of standardized tests and rubrics might oversimplify the complex nature of creativity and writing. The reliance on a single measure of creativity and writing proficiency might not capture the full extent of these constructs. Additionally, the specific statistical values or effect sizes were not reported, making it difficult to determine the strength of the correlation. Future studies incorporating multiple measures and longitudinal designs would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship.

In Fasko's (2001) study with high school students, the relationship between creativity and writing fluency was explored. The findings revealed a positive correlation, indicating that students with higher levels of creativity demonstrated greater fluency in generating a larger number of ideas during the writing process. However, the study's reliance on a single writing task and limited focus on fluency might restrict the generalizability of the findings. Furthermore, the study did not report specific statistical values or effect sizes, which hindered a comprehensive assessment of the strength of the correlation. Future research encompassing a broader range of writing measures as well as other aspects of writing quality would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship.

Another study by Kim and Kim (2020) examined the writing proficiency and creativity skills of middle school students. The researchers utilized a self-report measure of creativity and assessed writing proficiency through holistic scoring of essays. The results demonstrated a significant positive correlation between creativity scores and writing proficiency, indicating that students with higher creativity levels exhibited stronger writing skills. The use of self-reported creativity measures might create subjectivity biases, even though the study added to the understanding of the positive relationship between creativity and writing ability. Additionally, the use of holistic scoring might limit the depth of analysis of specific writing aspects. The specific statistical values or effect sizes were not provided, making it difficult to

evaluate the strength of the correlation. Future research utilizing a combination of self-reported measures and objective evaluations of writing quality would enhance the validity of the findings.

A meta-analysis conducted by Kaufman and Baer (2008) synthesized findings from multiple studies to examine the relationship between creativity and writing ability across various age groups and populations. The results of the meta-analysis indicated a moderate positive correlation between creativity and writing ability, suggesting that creativity played a significant role in the development of writing proficiency. However, it was important to acknowledge that the meta-analysis relied on aggregated findings from various studies, and the specific statistical values or effect sizes of individual studies were not reported. While the meta-analysis supported a positive correlation between creativity and writing ability, the strength of the correlation might vary across different age groups and populations. Future research incorporating more rigorous methodology and examining potential moderating variables would provide a deeper understanding of this relationship.

An exploratory study in Iran aimed to analyze the aspects that improved narrative writing proficiency. A narrative task was developed, and data was collected from sixty participants in Malaysia to investigate Malaysian ESL young learners with the background that more importance was given to creativity at secondary school level (Cheung, et al. 2021). Therefore, Awang et al., (2021) used a rubric and identified the errors in students writing that hindered the writing proficiency. Complexity, accuracy, and fluency (CAF) framework was widely adopted. A similar experimental study was administered in Iran on 408 students from four different universities, a written narrative task was assigned, and a standard creativity test questionnaire developed by Auzmendi, et al. (1996) was used to measure the relationship between creativity and narrative writing. The results of the study aligned with results of Otto (1998) who found that there was a significant positive relationship between creativity and ESL learners' communicative task in which imagination was used to develop ideas. These results were also supported by (Ehrman & Oxford, 2003; Ehrman, 1996; Grigorenko et al., 2000).

The most prevalent method used to evaluate students' writing creativity was the "Consensual Assessment Technique" (CAT). This technique involved a panel of experts who collectively assessed the creativity in writing tests and arrived at a mutual decision (Taylor et al., 2021). Most of the studies supported the claim that there was a positive correlation between creativity and writing tasks in various forms. In 2021, Bano et al., conducted research to explore the relationship between creativity and academic achievements among undergraduate learners from six public and private universities. The data was collected from 331 students of different departments. The study analyzed the data statistically and employed Kaufman et al., (2013) scale. No relationship was found between creativity and academic achievement in the study.

Hence, the results challenged the common belief of significant relationship. However, the limitation of the study was the self- regularity reports of the students.

In Pakistani context, research conducted by Nasir et al. (2021) on 30 participants, examined the impact of students' English-language creative writing on their academic development. Pakistani students' creative writing skills were impacted by their level of language ability as English was the second language. According to the findings, 94% of the students agreed that creativity in students' writing was important.

The literature review identified some gaps in the current body of research. There were limited studies related to the evaluation of creativity and narrative writing at tertiary level in Pakistani context. Moreover, this review emphasized diverse methodologies in creativity and narrative writing-related data collection (D'Souza, 2021). The present study aimed to investigate the relationship between creativity of learners and the ESL writing proficiency of undergraduate learners to address the identified gaps. The framework of Torrance (1965) was adopted in this research and creativity of students was measured as a product instead of a process in this research.

Theoretical Framework:

To explore the relationship between creativity and writing skills, two prominent theoretical frameworks were used in this study. The first approach considered creativity as a cognitive approach and the second as a theoretical sociocultural approach. The cognitive-oriented theories of creativity shed important light on the cognitive abilities and thought processes essential to creative thinking. The proposers of cognitive theories promoted these processes as they enhanced creative thinking skills and were considered its crucial part.

The importance of social and cultural variables on the emergence and expression of creativity is highlighted by sociocultural theories of creativity. One of the foundational theories in this area was Lev Vygotsky's Social-Cultural Theory. Vygotsky (1978) proposed that cultural aspects played a crucial role in shaping individuals' thinking and creativity. He emphasized the significance of collaborative interactions and cultural activities within a sociocultural context for the emergence of creative thinking.

The Componential Theory of Creativity (Amabile, 1996) combined cognitive and sociocultural elements. Amabile (1996) emphasized how creativity was influenced by intrinsic drive, extrinsic rewards, and the social environment. She underscored the importance of supportive social conditions, such as freedom, encouragement, and recognition, in fostering and enhancing creativity. To examine the connection between creativity and narrative writing, numerous studies were conducted in the past. An educational reform was passed to promote creative writing at school level and enhance critical thinking skills, beside introducing creative writing techniques (Myers, 1993). The schools were failing to teach the students verbal and oral

communication skills. Students were encouraged to learn creative writing skills to express their own thoughts on literary pieces or produce their own poems, stories, novels or essays.

Torrance Test of Creative Thinking (TTCT) was developed by Torrance (1965) as a widely recognized and influential theoretical framework for evaluating creative skills. It consisted of four main components, i.e., fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration, which collectively provided a comprehensive approach to understanding and measuring creative thinking abilities in individuals. The ability to provide numerous ideas or responses in a small amount of time was referred to as fluency. High fluency scores indicated an individual's capacity to produce a wide range of ideas, reflecting a rich and diverse creative output. Flexibility measured the ability to shift between different categories or approaches when generating ideas. Individuals with high flexibility scores demonstrated cognitive openness and adaptability, enabling them to explore various perspectives and unconventional thinking paths. Originality assessed the uniqueness and novelty of the ideas generated. This component focused on identifying individuals who produced innovative and novel ideas that deviated from conventional patterns of thinking. Further, elaboration gauged the level of detail and richness in developing and expanding upon the ideas presented. High elaboration scores suggested individuals' ability to elaborate on their ideas, adding depth and complexity to their creative outputs. (TTCT), was widely used l in creativity related research in educational settings, and creative talent identification. By incorporating the four components, the TTCT offered a standardized and systematic evaluation of individuals' creative potential and abilities. The present study employed the TTCT model of creativity as this model was developed for all levels of learner, belonging to both native and non-native language.

Research Questions:

This study addressed the following research questions.

1. Is there any correlation between creativity and narrative writing proficiency level of ESL learners?
2. Is there any significant difference between the student's writing and creativity scores?
3. Which gender demonstrates superior performance in both writing and creativity?

Hypothesis:

H1: There is no relationship between creativity and writing proficiency.

H2: There is no significance difference between creativity and writing proficiency scores.

H3: There is no significant difference in the performance of males and females in both writing and creativity.

Research Methodology:

A quantitative approach was utilized in this study to statistically analyze test scores to address

the research questions.

Settings and Participants:

The data was gathered from 30 undergraduate students studying in the literature department at a public sector university in central Punjab, Pakistan. This study employed convenience sampling by selecting 18 male and 12 female participants. The participants were fully informed about the study and provided their consent before participating. Additionally, the research received prior approval from the concerned department.

Instruments:

In this study, the creativity level of the students was assessed using a rubric developed by Torrance (1965) and Guilford (1961). The rubric was an adapted version of the Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking (TTCT). It focused on measuring three key aspects of creativity: fluency, flexibility, and originality. Each aspect had a maximum score of 12 points for generating ideas correctly, and 0 points were given if these concepts were lacking in the writing. Additionally, for incomplete and repetitive ideas, points ranging from 1 to 8 were assigned. To ensure the reliability and validity of the instrument, previous research conducted by Rababah et al. (2013) was applied. Furthermore, to assess creativity, the writing proficiency of the students was also evaluated using the IELTS writing band descriptor. This descriptor was a standard tool used to assess writing skills and proficiency levels of students. By employing this rubric and utilizing the IELTS writing band descriptor, the study aimed to gain insights into the creativity and writing abilities of the participants.

Data Collection:

For data collection regarding the creativity of ESL learners, the participants were instructed to write a story with a word count of 500-650 words within a one-hour time frame. The prompt provided to the students for the creative writing task was a picture prompt. To aid in the writing process, separate sheets were provided for brainstorming, mind mapping, and title development. The test was conducted in an open and transparent environment to ensure fairness and objectivity.

Data Analysis:

The present study aimed to find the relationship between the creativity and narrative writing proficiency of ESL learners of different levels. To test the proficiency level in writing of the of participant undergraduate learners, IELTS band descriptor was used. The scores of the test were calculated using the TTCT creativity rubric and the same test was checked using IELTS rubric. A participation ID was assigned to each student. *SPSS* software was used to analyze the scores of both creativity and writing proficiency of the participants. The means and standard deviation of both variables were calculated which provided the descriptive statistics. For inferential statistics, two tailed *t*-test as applied to compare the variables, whereas the

comparison results of male and female students were calculated using independent *t*-test. Lastly, correlation between the creativity and writing proficiency scores was calculated using Pearson correlation formula.

Results:

The primary goal of this study was to investigate the relationship between creativity and narrative writing proficiency levels of ESL (English as a Second Language) learners. The researchers also assessed whether there were noteworthy variations between students' writing and creativity scores. Additionally, the study investigated the influence of gender on both creativity and writing proficiency. To achieve this, the participants were categorized into two groups based on gender, and a comparative analysis was conducted using the scores of males and females in terms of writing proficiency and creativity. The data for males and females were subjected to an independent *t*-test.

Table 1: *Comparison of Male and Female Data*

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Writing	M	18	5.1528	1.71099	.40328
	F	12	6.1875	1.51929	.43858
Creativity	M	18	17.0556	8.12022	1.91395
	F	12	22.5833	7.99384	2.30762

The results in Table 1 indicated that female participants scored higher on both "Writing" (*M* = 6.1875, *SD* = 1.51929) and "Creativity" (*M* = 22.5833, *SD* = 7.99384) compared to male participants, who scored lower on "Writing" (*M* = 5.1528, *SD* = 1.71099) and "Creativity" (*M* = 17.0556, *SD* = 8.12022). Overall, females outperformed males indicating a higher mean score and lower standard deviation among females for both writing proficiency and creativity.

Table 2: *Independent Sample t-test*

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
WRITING	Equal variances assumed	.067	.797	-1.695	28	.101	-1.035	.611	-2.285	.216
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.737	25.616	.094	-1.035	.596	-2.260	.191
CREATIVITY	Equal variances assumed	.439	.513	-1.838	28	.077	-5.528	3.008	-11.689	.633
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.844	23.993	.078	-5.528	2.998	-11.716	.660

The results in Table 2 showed the significant difference between gender, writing and creativity, an independent sample *t*-test. The *t*-tests were performed assuming equal variances and not assuming equal variances. The results indicated that there were no significant differences in

the mean writing and creativity scores between the two gender groups, regardless of whether equal variances were assumed or not. The *p*-values for all the *t*-tests were greater than 0.05, suggesting that any observed differences in means were not statistically significant and likely occurred by chance. However, to further explore the significant difference between gender, writing and creativity, an independent sample *t*-test was used, as given in Table 2 below.

Table 3 : *Descriptive Statistics*

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Writing	5.5667	1.69041	30
Creativity	19.2667	8.39513	30

The results in Table 3 showed descriptive statistics to provides valuable insights on the variable of creativity and narrative writing proficiency. To test the null hypothesis, the correlation between narrative writing proficiency and creativity was measured using Pearson's product-moment correlation. The mean score for "Writing" was found to be 5.5667 (*SD* = 1.69041) based on the sample of 30 participants, while the mean score for "Creativity" was 19.2667 (*SD* = 8.39513). These statistics indicated a notable difference in the mean scores between the two variables. The average difference between the means of both creativity and writing is 13.7. The results showed that the scores of students in creativity are higher than writing.

Table 4: *Paired Samples Statistics*

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Sd. Error Mean
Pair 1	Writing	5.5523	30	1.66638	.30424
	creativity	19.4000	30	8.33191	1.52119

The results in Table 4 showed that the paired sample *t*-test calculated the standard error mean (*SEM*). The SEM for writing (0.30424) was substantially smaller than the standard error for creativity (1.52119). The standard deviation (writing = 1.66638) and (creativity = 8.33191) reflected the dispersion of scores around the mean and indicated the level of variability within each variable. The SD for creativity was notably higher than that of writing, signifying a wider range of scores and greater variability in creativity levels among the participants.

Table 5: *Pearson Correlation of Writing and Creativity*

		Writing	Creativity
Writing	Pearson Correlation	1	.842**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	30	30
Creativity	Pearson Correlation	.842**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	30	30

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results in Table 5 showed the correlation between variables. The Pearson correlation coefficient (*r*) between the two variables was .842, which was highly significant ($p < .001$) at the 0.01 level (two-tailed). The correlation coefficient of .842 suggested a significant and positive association between the two variables, indicating that higher scores in writing proficiency were positively correlated with higher levels of creativity in narrative writing among the ESL learners.

Table 6: *Paired Samples Test*

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Writing - Creativity	-13.70000	7.03146	1.28376	-16.32559	-11.07441	-10.672	29	.000

The results in Table 6 showed that the standard deviation of the paired differences (7.03146) indicated variability in the extent to which participants displayed greater creativity in their writing. The 95% confidence interval of the difference (-16.32559 to -11.07441) further supported the significant positive association between the two variables. This finding suggested that the participants' creative writing abilities outperformed their writing proficiency levels.

Discussion:

Based on the data analysis and results, the present study provided valuable insights into the relationship between creativity and narrative writing proficiency among undergraduate ESL learners. The findings supported theoretical frameworks that highlighted the importance of creativity in writing skills. The main purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between creativity and narrative writing proficiency of undergraduate ESL learners. The findings provided valuable insights into the importance of creativity in developing writing skills and support previous research and theoretical frameworks.

The descriptive statistics revealed a notable difference in the mean scores between creativity and writing. The average difference between the means of both variables was 13.7, indicating

that students scored significantly higher in creativity compared to writing. Hence the null hypothesis 2 “There was no significance difference between creativity and writing proficiency scores” was rejected. The finding aligned with previous studies that have found a positive correlation between creativity and writing ability (Plucker et al., 2006; Runco, 2007; Runco & Acar, 2012). It suggested that students who demonstrated higher levels of creativity in their narrative writing tended to exhibit greater writing proficiency.

The correlation analysis demonstrated a strong positive correlation (r = .842) between creativity and writing proficiency. The correlation analysis revealed a strong positive correlation between writing and creativity (Table 4). The result of the study supported the previous research which found a positive relationship between creativity and writing skills across different age groups and populations (Kaufman & Baer, 2008; Kim & Kim, 2020). The magnitude of .842 indicated that the relationship was strong, meaning that the two variables were likely to vary together in a predictable manner. It also aligned with the Amabile (1996) theoretical framework. As the correlation coefficient approaches 1, it suggested a strong positive linear association between the two variables. In this case, the correlation coefficient of .842 indicated a substantial positive relationship, indicating that higher scores on “Creativity” tended to be associated with higher scores on “Writing,” and vice versa. The coefficient of correlation R was also calculated, and it resulted in 0.7 which means 70%. The magnitude of 0.7 indicated that the relationship was strong, meaning that the two variables were likely to vary together in a predictable manner.

The paired samples test confirmed a significant difference between creativity and writing scores, further supporting the notion that creativity was a distinct aspect of writing. The t-value of -10.672 and a low p-value ($p < .001$) provided strong evidence against the null hypothesis, indicating that there was indeed a significant difference between the two variables. This finding was similar with the previous research (Plucker et al., 2006; Runco & Acar, 2012) that showed a positive correlation between creativity and writing proficiency. It suggested that creativity played a crucial role in effective writing and that students who demonstrated higher levels of creativity were more likely to have better writing abilities.

The gender comparison reflected that women were better than men both academically and in creative skill. An additional comparison drawn between the genders and writing variable showed that there was no effect of gender on writing or creativity. However, according to the results of this study there was effect of writing proficiency on creativity as a narrative writing. The t-tests were performed assuming equal variances and not assuming equal variances. The results indicated that there were no significant differences in the mean writing and creativity scores between the two gender groups, regardless of whether equal variances were assumed or not. The p-values for all the t-tests were greater than 0.05, suggesting that any observed

differences in means were not statistically significant and likely occurred by chance. However, no significance was found between gender, creativity and writing variables (Table 2). The results accepted the hypothesis "There is no significant difference in the performance of males and females in both writing and creativity".

The results of the present study have important implications for educators and researchers. Educators could utilize these findings to design instructional strategies that fostered creativity in narrative writing, recognizing the positive impact it has on writing proficiency. Incorporating creative writing techniques, encouraging divergent thinking, and providing opportunities for self-expression could enhance students' writing skills. By fostering creativity in the classroom, educators could help students develop their writing abilities and promote effective communication.

This study has some limitations due to sampling. The sample size of 30 undergraduate ESL learners as participants from a specific department in one university limited the generalizability of the findings to a larger population as the results may not be applicable to other age groups or language academic levels. Future research should consider larger and more diverse samples to enhance the external validity of the findings. In addition to that, the study relied on self-reported measures and did not consider other potentially influential factors, such as motivation or socioemotional aspects of writing.

Future studies incorporating a multi-method approach and considering additional variables would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between creativity and writing proficiency. Longitudinal studies could be conducted to examine the impact of creativity on writing skills over time. The effectiveness of different instructional interventions in promoting creativity and improving writing proficiency might also be investigated. Moreover, the underlying mechanisms that could contribute to the relationship between creativity and writing might be explored. Lastly, there was no inter-rater reliability checked between the score of writing proficiency and creativity. The unexperienced rater might produce some flaws in results hence the results might not be considered very reliable however, the instruments used in the research were checked for their reliability and validity.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the present study found that there was strong positive correlation between creativity and writing proficiency among undergraduate ESL learners. There was significant difference found in the scores of creativity test and writing scores and the results revealed that female undergraduate students outperformed male students in both creativity and writing tests. However, no significant difference was found in gender, writing and creativity. The findings supported previous research and theoretical frameworks, highlighting the importance of fostering creativity in writing instruction. Educators could utilize these findings to develop

effective pedagogical strategies, while researchers could further investigate the underlying mechanisms and explore interventions to enhance creativity and writing proficiency. However, caution should be exercised due to the limitations of the study, of having small sample size from only one department, for extending the findings and validating the research. By deepening our understanding of the relationship between creativity and writing proficiency, we could enhance writing instructions and promote effective communication skills among students. Moreover, examining additional variables, such as language background and cultural influences, could enrich our understanding of the relationship between creativity and writing proficiency in the ESL context.

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