



Effects of Primary School Fourth-Grade Students' Attitude, Disposition and Writer's Block on Writing Success

Muhammet Baştuğ¹

Abstract

This study uses structural equation modelling to investigate the effect of primary school fourth-grade students' attitudes towards writing, writer's block and writing disposition on their writing success. Participants of the study included 735 primary school fourth-grade students. The results indicate that attitudes towards writing and writing disposition significantly and positively affect writing success that Wattitudes towards writing and writing disposition have a significant negative effect on writer's block and that writer's block has a significant negative effect on writing success. Another important result of the study is that attitudes towards writing and writing disposition play a mediating role in the effect of attitudes towards writing and writing disposition on writing success. According to path coefficients, the areas that have the largest effects on writing success can be identified as, respectively, writer's block, writing disposition and attitudes towards writing. The study results are then discussed in relation to the literature on the subject.

Keywords

Attitude
Disposition
Success
Writer's block

Article Info

Received: 12.10.2014
Accepted: 06.26.2015
Online Published: 08.04.2015

DOI: 10.15390/EB.2015.4279

Introduction

Writing is one of the basic language skills, not only to express feeling, thoughts and beliefs but also used in the individual's learning and development. Even writing is among the most effective tools of communication (Ungan, 2007). Deficiencies in writing skills affect learners' academic based learning negatively. On the other hand, effective writing skill positively contributes to many activities of adults such as sending an email or writing a petition, as well as the development of academic careers. Such deficiencies also affect students' learning in school contexts (Rogers, & Graham, 2008; Temur, 2004; Ungan, 2007). Although writing is of great importance for individuals both at school and out of school, it is claimed that it is a field ignored in the Turkish education system has ignored the field of writing. Teaching, assessing and monitoring of writing is not given enough attention in schools (Baştuğ, 2014; Ungan, 2007). This indicates that the cognitive, affective and psychomotor skills that contribute writing success are not fully understood and that there is a lack of awareness about the writing process. It can be asserted that cognitive, affective and psychomotor skills that are affective on writing success haven't been thoroughly understood and that there is a deficiency of awareness with regard to writing process.

¹ Niğde University Faculty of Education Department of Elementary Education, Turkey, mbastug@nigde.edu.tr

Past analysis of the writing process has focused more on cognitive processes. Recent studies have pointed out that the writing process is multidimensional and that it includes social and affective dimensions (Schultz, & Fecho, 2000), emphasizing in particular the importance of its affective aspect (İşeri, & Ünal, 2010; Piazza, & Siebert, 2008). Mcleod (1997, cited in Hawthorne, 2010) claims that affective factors affect all stages of the writing process. However, whilst there is a huge body of research focused on the writing process, fewer studies have examined the affective dimension of writing (Piazza, & Siebert, 2008). Nevertheless, the contribution of affective factors to success in writing is highlighted in several studies (Graham, Berninger, & Fan, 2007; İşeri, & Ünal, 2010; Piazza, & Siebert, 2008) that show that learning how to become a good writer means adopting positive attitudes towards writing and writing disposition (Boscolo, 2008).

In this respect, the present study focuses on the effect of students' attitudes towards writing, writing disposition and writer's block on their writing success. For that purpose, first writing attitude, writing disposition and writer's block are described. Because these concepts are closely related to each other and sometimes they tend to be interchangeable.

Attitudes towards Writing

Attitude is a concept that has long been emphasized in psychology (Ajzen, & Fishbein, 1977). Eagly and Chaiken (1993, p. 1) define attitude as a “*psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favor or disfavor*”. Similarly, according to Ajzen (1989, p. 241), attitude is the tendency of an individual to react positively or negatively to an object or an idea. An attitude towards an object, an idea or an individual is a very permanent system comprised of cognitive and affective components and includes behavioural tendencies (Freedman, Sears, & Carlsmith, 1989). The cognitive component consists of beliefs related to attitude whilst the affective component consists of feelings linked to these beliefs and the behavioural tendency prepares the subject to react in a specific fashion.

Attitudes receive significant attention in education, especially in the domains of reading (Cothorn, & Collins, 1992; McKenna, Kear, & Elisworth, 1995) and writing as language skills (Graham et al., 2007; Kear, Coffman, McKenna, & Ambrosio, 2000). Graham et al. (2007, pp. 517-8) consider attitudes towards writing to be a dimension of motivational factors in writing skills. They note that, “*Writing attitude is an affective disposition involving how the act of writing makes the author feel, ranging from happy to unhappy*”. Negative experiences faced by students in written communication practices during teaching and inadequate feedback that could, if completed properly, improve and develop students' writing skills may, over time, lead to students adopting negative attitudes towards writing (Karatay, 2011). Attitudes are affected by school contexts, academic success, interests and parents' interest and involvement in students' lives (Cothorn, & Collins, 1992). Graham et al. (2007, p. 518) state that those students who have a more positive attitude towards writing will put a lot more effort into their writing and complete more writing activities than those with low attitude levels, which may contribute to individual differences in writing success. However, several inherent difficulties in writing may make it difficult for students to enjoy writing and adopt it as a skill that they can use throughout life (Baş, & Şahin, 2013). As a result, experiences of the writing process play an important role in determining the attitudes towards writing that individuals adopt, which is reflected in their writing success.

Writing Disposition

The concept of disposition is used in psychology and education as well as in fields such as fashion and politics. The *Turkish Dictionary* (TDK, 2005) defines disposition as “*sincere orientation, tendency, or inclination to like, want, or do something*”. According to this definition, disposition can be regarded as an individual's ongoing desire for a specific idea, attitude or behaviour. It can also be defined as the inherent predisposition to exhibit any behaviour. On the other hand, Buss and Craik (1983, cited in Katz, 1993, p. 5) define disposition as the frequency of an action. According to Katz (1993), the behaviour of an individual, such as an act like helping others and giving people gifts, frequently indicates that he or she has acquired a disposition. Disposition is directed by beliefs and attitudes related to values such as respect, responsibility, honesty, justice, sympathy and empathy (Almerico, Johnston,

Henriott, & Shapiro, 2011). Thus, disposition appears at the stage when these beliefs and attitudes transform into behaviour. Accordingly, disposition can be, at this point, considered as playing a driving role in behaviour.

Students develop dispositions towards writing and, like other affective factors, students' writing dispositions are valid objects of study within the domain of writing research (Baş, & Şahin, 2013; Baysal, Duman Arkan, & Hastürk, 2012; İşeri, 2010; İşeri, & Ünal, 2010; Uçgun, 2014; Ünal, 2010). Writing disposition is viewed as a large structure within the affective domain. When individuals encounter any difficulty in the process of writing, they, based on disposition, bring resources such as tolerance, willingness to take risks, determination and perseverance, motivation and interest to the process of writing (Piazza, & Siebert, 2008). Writing disposition can be defined as the affective power that prompts students to be intrinsically motivated and more likely to write.

Disposition is not a simple concept; it includes a variety of dimensions. McClenny (2010, p. 4) posits that writing disposition includes three dimensions: cognition, affect and social context. Cognition is the knowledge and abilities underpinning disposition. Students with high levels of knowledge and ability are more willing and eager whilst completing an activity. The affective dimension includes the factors linked to an individual's willingness to participate in any activity, such as metacognition, motivation, self-efficacy and persistence. Social context is the combination of cognition and the affective dimension. McClenny (2010) summarizes the concept of disposition by stating that disposition lies at the intersection of cognition, affection and social context. On the other hand, Piazza and Siebert (2008, p. 278) point out that writing disposition includes three different affective attitudes: confidence, passion and determination. Confidence reflects the effectiveness of an individual as a writer and that individual's belief in his or her own writing ability. Passion is an individual's dedication to writing, their willingness to write constantly and their pleasure at devoting time to writing. Determination means constantly completing writing tasks, being interested in writing and spending time on writing.

Writer's Block

The concept of writer's block is included in language domains such as writing and speaking. The word 'block' is defined in the *Turkish Dictionary* (TDK, 2005) as the inability to speak fluently and comfortably. Failing to write fluently and comfortably is also an issue. Sources consider this experience to also fall under the term of writer's block (Hall, 1998; Huston, 1998; Peterson, 1987; Rose, 1981). Rose (1984) defines writer's block as the failure in or inability to begin writing or continuing to write due to a lack of basic skill, willingness or commitment. Huston (1998, p. 93) views writer's block as the individual no longer having the skills needed for putting ideas into words on paper and states that writer's block is a reaction to stress for writers. According to Huston, writer's block is a condition of mental inactivity. An individual with writer's block is willing to write but cannot write and create a text (Poff, 2004). This is a sign of a problem in an individual's attempt to produce successful writing.

Issues such as students lacking content knowledge of the writing topic, devoting limited time to writing, teachers not helping students when they need help and not being familiar with the subject of the writing have all been proposed as the causes of writer's block (Huston, 1998). Moreover, Huston (1998) has suggested that affective situations such as anxiety, rage, anger, manufactured fears, unrest and perfectionism experienced by individuals during writing may lead them to suffer from writer's block. Similarly, Boice (1993, pp. 7-25) points to the problems of internal criticism, fear of failure, perfectionism, previous experiences, the process of delaying and mental health as the general reasons for writer's block. On the other hand, Rose (1984) claims that strict rules forbidding or requiring this or that during the writing process may lead to writer's block. The evaluation of students' writing and grading by teachers may frighten students. These fears are also affective situations that can cause writer's block (Miller, 2010).

Writer's block can be seen at various stages of the writing process. However, Özbay and Zorbaz (2012) point out that writer's block is often observed at the stage when an individual is beginning to write, when they cannot decide how to begin writing or what to write about. Rose (1983) states that students with a high level of writer's block spend more than half of the time allotted thinking and planning before writing. According to Özbay and Zorbaz (2012), writer's block experienced at the beginning stage of writing may subsequently result in a complete breakdown of the process of writing. Thus, it is possible to see the effects of writer's block in every stage of writing. The relevant literature notes that writer's block may be caused by both external and affective factors, by deficiencies of knowledge in topics and content and by time limits, criticism and grading. However, the extent of the effect of writing attitudes and writing disposition as affective factors on writer's block is not clear enough.

Conceptual Relationships

Research has revealed that motivational variables such as attitudes, interests and self-efficacy predict writing performance (Knudson, 1995; Pajares, 2003). Talented writers have much more motivation than those who are less talented (Graham, Schwartz, & MacArthur, 1993). Additionally, instructional activities designed to improve motivation have a positive effect on students' success in writing (Schunk, & Swartz, 1993). Studies consistently demonstrate that there is a powerful link between affective factors and writing success. Deficiencies in writing skill have been linked to deficiencies in attitudes towards writing and it has been shown that improving attitudes towards writing will increase writing success (Kırmızı, 2009). Graham et al. (2007, p. 518) points out that individuals with more positive attitudes towards writing will put a lot more effort into writing and complete more writing activities than those with more negative attitudes, which may contribute to individual differences in writing success. Similarly, researchers claim that individuals with less positive attitudes are less prone to using strategies whilst those with highly positive writing attitudes tend to exhibit more forms of creative and cognitive engagement during the writing process. According to Graham et al. (2007), those with less positive attitudes use more cognitive resources than those with positive attitudes. This may lead to a decrease in these individuals' writing performance. In a study conducted in line with these views, Graham et al. (2007) revealed that students' writing attitudes affect their writing success. In another study, Lee (2013) pointed out the importance of the relationships between writing attitudes, learning behaviour and writing success. Lee revealed a strong relationship between attitudes towards writing and writing success.

The relationship between students' attitudes and literacy skills emerges at an early age. In a study conducted with 201 preschoolers between the ages of five and six, Cunningham (2008) found that there was a distinct relationship between students' attitudes and literacy skills. However, students' attitudes towards writing worsen as they get older. According to Kear et al. (2000), positive writing attitudes diminish with each passing year of schooling. Students' negative experiences and the negative feedback they receive are the factors that cause their attitudes towards writing to deteriorate.

Another motivational factor linked with writing success is writing disposition. Research has associated writing disposition with students' writing and academic success. In a study conducted by Tüfekçioğlu (2010), a medium level of positive relationship was found between sixth-grade students' writing disposition and writing success. In terms of the dimensions of writing disposition, a medium level of positive relationship was found between the dimensions of confidence and writing success whilst a weak positive relationship was found between the dimensions of continuity and writing success. Baş and Şahin (2012) have revealed that writing disposition accounts for approximately 41% of academic success in Turkish lessons. Researchers have found positive, significant relationships between academic success and the confidence dimension of writing disposition at .618, between academic success and the continuity dimension at .505 and between academic success and the passion dimension at .514. Students' writing disposition improves as their success in writing increases.

Although the concepts of writing attitude and writing disposition are closely related, there is a fine line between them. There are two different views regarding this difference. One claims that writing disposition comes before writing attitude and is a social and cognitive structure that affects writing attitude (İşeri, 2010; İşeri, & Ünal, 2010; Piazza, & Siebert, 2008; Uçgun, 2014; Ünal, 2010). Focusing on the definition of each concept in order to reveal the relationship between writing attitude and writing disposition, Ünal (2010) states that writing attitude is an indication of writing disposition. According to Piazza and Siebert (2008), writing disposition is viewed as a more dynamic structure and it is believed to be composed of social interactions. On the other hand, writing attitude is seen as a more dynamic structure and a psychological structure in the affective domain. According to this point of view, writing disposition affects writing attitude due to social factors. Writing disposition is more like a social cognitive structure because, as Notar (2009) states, writing disposition is sensitive to environmental factors and the adults and the peers in an individual's environment positively or negatively affect his/her writing disposition. İşeri (2010) emphasises that the concept of writing disposition should be linked to analysis of the cognitive structure, including how individuals live because of their experiences and how they think and behave. However, depending on the definition of writing disposition, İşeri (2010) explains that individuals are affected by cognitive factors such as their content or writing knowledge, knowledge and skills related to the process and social factors such as their goals of success and various learning situations and contexts. According to the second point of view, the writing attitude emerges before disposition and exists without behaviour. Discussing the concept of writing disposition and writing attitude, Katz (1993) proposes that writing attitude can be considered a predisposition to behave in a specific fashion, positively or negatively, and that attitudes can exist without behaviour. On the other hand, disposition often emerges together with behaviour, so whilst disposition is believed to be linked to behaviour, attitudes can exist independently from behaviour.

Different points of view can be proposed regarding the concepts of writing disposition and writing attitude. However, most definitions of writing attitude (Ajzen, 1989; Eagly, & Chaiken, 1993) include disposition. The predominant view is that these two concepts are related to each other but that attitude is more of an internal and psychological static whilst disposition is a more dynamic structure composed of more social and cognitive factors. In this sense, writing disposition is a social cognitive structure that affects writing attitude. Considered from another point of view, attitude and disposition can be the cause or result of one another and both can affect behavior in a similar manner. However, more evidence is needed to clarify the fine line between these two concepts. This study does not attempt to determine a causal relationship between these two concepts but, instead, examines the effect of both on the writing process.

Another factor linked to writing success is writer's block. Individuals' attitudes and emotional states can affect their writing anxiety, concern, writer's block and other affective conditions (Rahilly, 2004). Rahilly (2004) claims that many affective reactions such as stress, anxiety and writer's block may pose problems for students' writing success. Özbay and Zorbaz (2012) state that students with low grades and writing success think for a long time about the topic they are going to write about, get stuck at a specific point before they even begin writing and may suffer more from writer's block since they have difficulty in expressing their opinions comfortably and fluently. Hall (1998) postulates that there may be a variety of reasons for writer's block and that students' fears of evaluation and criticism of their texts by others, especially teachers, can lead them to adopt negative attitudes towards writing. Hall (1998) reports that students' fear of failure may cause writer's block. Although several studies (Boice, 1993; Corbett, 1998; Hall, 1998; Peterson, 1987; Poff, 2004; Rose, 1980, 1981, 1984; Voss, 2003) consider writer's block a problem for writing success, they fail to investigate the effect of writing attitude and writing disposition on writer's block and the effect of these variables (disposition, attitude and writer's block) on writing success. This study aims to investigate the direct effect of writing attitude, writing disposition and writer's block on writing success and the mediating role of writer's block between these variables. In line with this aim, the following hypotheses have been put forward:

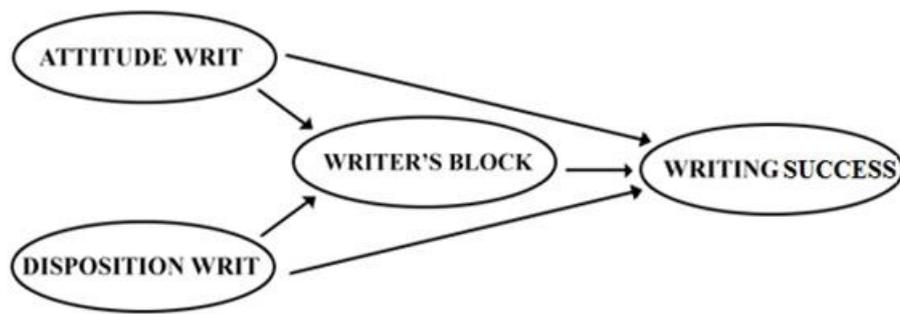


Figure 1. Research Model

H1: Writing attitude and writing disposition positively affect writing success at a statistically significant level;

H2: Writing attitude and writing disposition negatively affect writer's block at a statistically significant level;

H3: Writer's block negatively affects writing success at a statistically significant level, and;

H4: Writer's block plays a partial mediating role in the effect of writing attitude and writing disposition on writing.

Method

Research Model

The study in which both the presence and the degree of the effect of writing disposition, writing attitude and writer's block on writing success is investigated is conducted in relational survey model. Relational survey model is a research model which aims to determine the presence and/or degree of variation between two or more variables (Karasar, 2005, p. 81).

Participants

The participants in the study included 735 fourth-grade students at 15 schools located in different areas of Niğde, a province in Turkey. Of the participants, 385 were male (52.4%) and 350 were female (47.6%). In the literature, writing is classified as learning to write (the acquisition of writing skill) and writing in order to learn (using writing skill) (Gallavan, Bowles, & Young, 2007). Fourth-grade students are required to write a letter or a word, to form a sentence or to have learned how to fictionalize a text at their grade levels. Therefore, students do writing exercises mostly to acquire basic writing skills, or to learn to write, during first three grades. However, as from the fourth grade students are expected to use writing skill in learning process, for sharing information and especially as a means of expressing feelings and thoughts (MEB, 2005). The reason fourth graders were selected is that this grade is viewed as the period in which students begin to use reading and writing skills to learn everything since they have already learned how to read and write. Fourth-grade students are expected to express their thoughts, feelings and the knowledge they have acquired in order to learn, as well as to express themselves (MEB, 2005). In conclusion, this grade level is considered important for students to use writing functionally both in their further school lives and their lives out of school, which is the rationale in the selection of the study group.

Data Collection Instruments

The data collection instruments regarding the variables of the study included the writer's block scale, the writing disposition scale and the 6+1 Analytical Evaluation Rubric used to evaluate writing success.

Writer's Block Scale: The writer's block scale was developed by Rose (1981) and adapted for Turkish use by Özbay and Zorbaz (2012) by adding an item to the scale. The researchers determined that the scale was composed of one factor and the variance of this one-factor scale was 43%. Its Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was found to be 0.84.

The reliability and validity analyses of the writer's block scale were conducted for this study. First, exploratory factor analysis was conducted. Accordingly, the KMO value of the scale was determined to be 0.96 and the Barlett's test was found to be significant ($\chi^2=4919.204$, $df=45$, $p<.01$). This analysis determined that the 10-item scale included one factor and that the variance of the scale was 94%. Its Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was 0.93. According to the results of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) on the validity of the scale, the fit indices ($\chi^2/df=3.259$, $RMSEA=0.055$, $TLI=0.98$, $IFI=0.98$) of the model created using the structure of the scale with one factor were found to be sufficient.

Writing Disposition Scale: The writing disposition scale was developed by Piazza and Siebert (2008) and adapted for Turkish use by İşeri and Ünal (2010). The exploratory factor analysis conducted by the researchers confirmed that the scale was composed of three sub-dimensions (passion, confidence and determination). The total variance of the factor dimensions was determined as 46.26% of the scale. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficients of the scale were calculated and were determined to be 0.874 for the whole scale, 0.882 for the passion sub-dimension, 0.734 for the confidence sub-dimension and 0.639 for the determination sub-dimension. Confirmatory factor analysis was conducted by the researchers and the fit indices of the structural model related to the three-factor scale of writing disposition were found to be ($\chi^2/df=1.243$, $RMSEA=0.008$, $NFI=0.992$, $CFI=0.998$, $GFI=0.996$, $AGFI=0.992$, $IFI=0.998$).

The reliability and validity analyses of the writing disposition scale were conducted for this study. First, exploratory factor analysis was conducted. The KMO value of the scale was determined to be 0.95 and the Barlett's test was found to be significant ($\chi^2=6673.199$, $df=735$, $p<.01$). Then, exploratory factor analysis was conducted using the varimax rotation technique. This analysis determined that the 21-item scale included three factors and that the variance of this three-factor scale was 55%. Its Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was 0.91. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was also calculated for the sub-dimensions of the scale: 0.84 for the dimension of passion, 0.71 for the dimension of confidence and 0.91 for the dimension of determination. According to the results of CFA on the validity of the scale, the fit indices ($\chi^2/df=2.726$, $RMSEA=.048$, $TLI=0.94$, $IFI=0.95$) of the model created through the three-factor structure of the scale were found to be sufficient.

Writing Attitude Scale: The writing attitude scale was developed by Kırmızı (2009). The factor loadings of the 34-item scale developed by the researchers were found to be between 0.50 and 0.86 and the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was calculated as 0.90.

The reliability and validity analyses of the writing attitude scale were conducted for this study. First, exploratory factor analysis was conducted. Accordingly, the KMO value of the scale was determined as 0.92 and the Barlett's test was found to be significant ($\chi^2=5634.229$, $df=276$, $p<.01$). Then, exploratory factor analysis was conducted using the varimax rotation technique. This analysis determined that the 34-item scale included four factors and that the variance of this four-factor scale was 52% and its Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was 0.87. Then, the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was calculated for the sub-dimensions of the scale: 0.86 for the first sub-dimension; .83 for the second sub-dimension; .74 for the third sub-dimension, and; 0.76 for the fourth sub-dimension. CFA on the validity of the scale determined that the fit indices ($\chi^2/df=2.483$, $RMSEA=.045$, $TLI=0.93$, $IFI=0.94$) of the model created with the four-factor structure of the scale were sufficient.

6+1 Analytic Writing Rubric and Writing Success: Benefiting from classroom teachers' views, Based on the views of classroom teachers, the concept of "helpfulness" related to the theme "Our Values"—one of the required themes included in the fourth-grade Turkish curriculum—was selected to determine students' success in writing. The students were asked to express their feelings and thoughts about this concept in written language. The students' written expressions were evaluated using the 6+1 Analytic Writing Rubric. This rubric was developed by researchers at the US Northwest Regional

Education Laboratory and adapted for Turkish use by Özkara (2007). The rubric aims to determine the basic features of good writing. The rubric is an effective tool for evaluating both the teaching of writing and written expression (Özkara, 2007). The rubric has seven dimensions (Özkara, 2007): "ideas, organization, style, choice of vocabulary, sentence fluency, punctuation and presentation". The maximum value assigned to each dimension is five whilst the minimum value is one. Similarly, in order to calculate the mean of all the dimensions, the maximum score that can be assigned to the whole scale is five whilst the minimum is one. To determine the rater reliability of the rubric, weighted Kappa coefficients were considered. The data obtained from the Kappa coefficient were interpreted as "Poor agreement = <.20; Fair agreement=.20-.40; Moderate agreement=.40-.60; Good agreement=.60-.80; Very good agreement=.80-1.00" (Şencan, 2005, p. 485). Accordingly, inter-rater agreement was found to be statistically significant ($p < .001$). The inter-rater agreement was 0.634 for the dimension of ideas, 0.663 for the dimension of organization, 0.650 for the dimension of style, 0.746 for the dimension of vocabulary choice, 0.664 for the dimension of sentence fluency, 0.664 for the dimension of punctuation and 0.688 for the dimension of presentation. These values indicate a good inter-rater agreement and demonstrate the reliability of scoring.

Data Analysis

Structural equation models, increasingly important in social sciences, were used to analyse the findings obtained by this study (Çetin, & Fıkrıkoca, 2010). In order to check the fitness of the model obtained from the analysis results, the commonly used fit indices, "Chi-Square/degrees of freedom (χ^2/df), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), Incremental Fit Index (IFI), and Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI)" were considered. The goodness-of-fit and acceptable value intervals are shown in Table 1 (Byrne, 2010; Schermelleh-Engel, Moosbrugger, & Müller, 2003; Şimşek, 2007)

Table 1. Structural Equation Models Fit Indices

Goodness-of-fit Indices	Good fit	Acceptable fit
χ^2/df	$0 \leq \chi^2/df \leq 2$	$2 < \chi^2/df \leq 5$
RMSEA	$0 \leq RMSEA \leq .05$	$.05 < RMSEA \leq .08$
IFI	$0.95 \leq IFI < 1.00$	$0.90 \leq IFI < 0.95$
TLI	$0.95 \leq TLI < 1.00$	$0.90 \leq TLI < 0.95$
CFI	$0.95 \leq CFI < 1.00$	$0.90 \leq CFI < 0.95$

Results

This study investigates the effect of writing attitude, writing disposition and writer's block on students' writing success. Moreover, it is also investigates whether writer's block plays a partial mediating role in the effect of writing attitude and writing disposition on writing success. Thus, descriptive statistics and correlations were provided particularly for the variables of the study. Later, the models related to the study's hypotheses were tested.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for the Variables in the Model

	Writer's Block	Writing Disposition	Attitude towards Writing	Writing Success
Correlations (r)				
Writer's Block	1			
Writing Disposition	-,258**	1		
Writing Attitude	-,303**	,394**	1	
Writing Success	-,585**	,463**	,501**	1
Mean	2,48	3,14	3,5	2,59
Standard Dev.	1,06	0,535	0,694	1,15
Skewness	0,502	-0,186	-0,110	,229
Kurtosis	-0,926	0,356	-0,569	-1,046
N	735	735	735	735

**0.01 level significantly.

According to the descriptive statistics in Table 1, there are positive, moderate and statistically significant relationships between writing attitudes, writing disposition and writing success. On the other hand, negative, moderate and statistically significant relationships were found between writing attitudes and writing disposition and between writing success and writer's block. The means of the variables were: 2.48 for writer's block; 3.14 for disposition; 3.5 for attitudes, and; 2.59 for success.

The Results Related to the Research Hypothesis

In the research, a structural model is formed to find out whether writing attitude, writing disposition and writer's block have an effect on writing success (Fig 2). Fit values of the model ($\chi^2/sd=1.97$; RMSEA=0.036; IFI=0.93; TLI=0.92; CFI=0.93) are found good and acceptable. It is seen that writing attitude ($\beta=0.23$, $p<.01$) and writing disposition ($\beta=0.34$, $p<.01$) have positive and significant effect on writing success while writer's block ($\beta= -0.51$, $p<.01$) have negative and significant effect. Also, in this model, writing attitude ($\beta= -0.28$, $p<.01$) and writing disposition ($\beta= -0.23$, $p<.01$) affect writer's block negatively. In this model, writer's block serves as a mediator of the effect of writing attitude and writing disposition on writing success. Findings related to the mediation role of writer's block are given in Table 3.

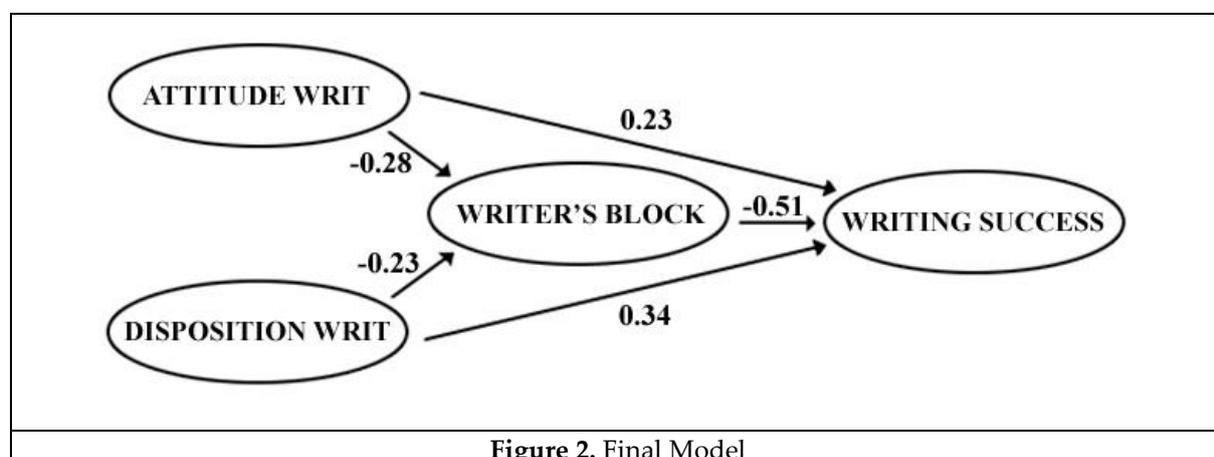


Figure 2. Final Model

Table 3. The Mediation Role of Writer's Block in the Effect of Writing Attitude and Writing Disposition on Writing Success (The Standardization Effect Results of Sobel Test and Variables)

Statistics	Mediation Type	Mediation Type
	Partial Mediator	Partial Mediator
Sobel z statics	4.21399064	4.19653724
Significance	0.00002509	0.00002710
Direct Effect	.292	.169
Indirect Effect	.101	.103
Total Effect	.393	.273

Students' writing dispositions affect writing success positively both directly and indirectly. Writer's block partially mediate this effect (Sobel $z=4.21399064$; $p<.05$). Similarly, students' writing attitudes also affect writing success positively both directly and indirectly. Writer's block has a partial mediation role in the effect of writing attitude on writing success (Sobel $z=4.19653724$; $p<.05$).

All the relations and hypothesis set within the study are accepted. Writer's block is affected by writing attitude and disposition while writing success is affected by writing attitude, disposition and writer's block. The effect of writing attitude and writing disposition on writing success is positive whereas that of writer's block is negative.

Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

Many researchers note that affective factors such as motivation, attitude, interest and anxiety are related to writing success (Knudson, 1995; Troia, Harbaugh, Shankland, Wolbers, & Lawrence, 2013; Troia, Shankland, & Wolbers, 2012). However, there is a limited body of causal and experimental research conducted on the direction and the status of this relationship and the effect of these variables on writing. This lack of research has also been discussed in previous studies (Graham et al., 2007). In the current study, the effect of writing attitude, disposition and writer's block was investigated through structural equation modelling. In line with this aim, the hypotheses formed and the model related to these hypotheses were tested. For the first hypothesis, the effect of writing attitude and writing disposition on writing success was tested. The first hypothesis was confirmed. Accordingly, writing attitude and writing disposition affected writing success positively and significantly. The study conducted by Knudson (1992) (Knudson, 1993, 1995) revealed that attitude plays an important role in accounting for the variance of writing performance and that highly positive attitudes towards writing are adopted by good writers. Similarly, other studies support the positive and statistically significant relationship between writing attitude and writing success (Graham et al., 2007; Lee, 2013). The other side of the picture is delineated by Kırmızı (2009), who attributes student's deficiencies in writing to deficiencies in their attitude towards writing. Those with poor attitudes towards writing will refrain from writing and write less than those with highly positive attitudes (Graham et al., 2007). Göçer (2013) found in a qualitative study that negative perceptions and attitudes towards writing adopted by teacher candidates were amongst the factors that affect writing success. This situation may have negative effects on an individual's writing success and lead those who have difficulty in writing to suffer from inefficacy in writing processes that may support their success—processes such as the use of strategy and the transference of experiences to the writing process.

Another variable that was tested in the first hypothesis and that affects writing success is writing disposition. Writing disposition positively affected students' success. The number of studies that account for the effect of writing disposition on writing success is very limited. McClenny (2010) found a moderate relationship between students' writing disposition and writing success. According to McClenny (2010), students who like writing feel that they can be successful in writing. In a correlation study conducted by Tüfekçioğlu (2010), a moderate positive relationship was found between students'

writing disposition and writing success. On the other hand, in indirect studies (Hawthorne, 2010; İşeri, 2010; İşeri, & Ünal, 2010; Piazza, & Siebert, 2008; Ünal, 2010), the importance of writing disposition for writing success is emphasised. These studies emphasise that it is necessary to improve students' disposition in order to improve their writing performance.

The second hypothesis developed in this research was confirmed. Accordingly, writing disposition and writing attitude affect writer's block negatively and significantly. Students with poor writing disposition and writing attitude suffer more from writer's block since those who have writer's block do not want to write, refrain from writing and cannot create texts (Peterson, 1987; Poff, 2004). Negative affective factors such as negative experiences, fears, anxiety and negative attitudes encountered during the writing process are amongst the causes of writer's block (Huston, 1998; Özbay, & Zorbaz, 2012; Poff, 2004). Many negative feelings and experiences related to writing can be considered causes of writer's block. The third hypothesis of the study was tested and confirmed. Writer's block negatively affects writing success at a statistically significant level since writer's block is a negative situation in terms of writing performance and those suffering from writer's block cannot continue writing (Huston, 1998; Miller, 2010; Rose, 1981, 1983, 1984). Students with writer's block spend most of their writing time at the preparation and initial stages and writer's block may even result in a complete breakdown of the writing process (Özbay, & Zorbaz, 2012). Boice (1993, p. 26) states that blocked writers exhibit characteristics such as a reluctance to complete written homework and may suffer from low self-esteem. Thus, these students will spend less time writing and their writing skills will weaken over time.

The model related to the last hypothesis was also confirmed. Writer's block plays a partial mediating role in the effect of writing attitude and writing disposition on writing success. This also confirms that the other variables in the model (writing attitude and disposition) have a direct and indirect significant effect on writing success. It was observed that the model is even stronger when writer's block is added.

In this research, the hypothesis model formed on the basis of related literature is tested and confirmed. Analysis of the path coefficients shows that the variable that most affects writing success is writer's block, followed, respectively, by writing disposition and writing attitude. These results are supported by the studies and sources that are discussed for each hypothesis. The results of the study support the idea that argues that improving students' writing disposition and attitude can help them achieve writing success and aid them in avoiding writer's block, in particular. There are several examples in the research that show that students' attitude and writing disposition, as well as their writing success, can be improved through the use of effective strategies. The experimental study conducted by Sever and Memiş (2013) indicated that a model based on the writing process positively affects students' writing success and writing disposition. Moreover, since writing disposition is affected by environmental factors, students' positive dispositions should be supported in the classroom (Notar, 2009). In this regard, appropriate activities that can improve their dispositions should be developed. In another experimental study, Erdoğan (2013) proposed a drama method to both improve students' writing skills and to push them to adopt a positive attitude towards writing. Students' attitudes can be improved by selecting interesting topics and organizing fun activities and then, as a continuation of these activities, their writing skills can also be improved (Kırmızı, 2009). Teachers should not leave the process of teaching writing to its own fate. They should support students in the writing process by using appropriate methods since negative experiences during the writing process and inadequate encouragement may, over time, lead to students adopting negative attitudes towards writing (Karataş, 2011). In addition, adults and teachers should be good role models who lead students to adopt positive feelings towards writing because, according to Hawthorne (2010), children can learn attitudes, values, standards and intellectual skills through observation. Since primary school students have just begun to deal with writing, these models assume much more importance.

Similar to writing disposition and writing attitude, writer's block is also a problem that needs to be solved for students because writer's block is thought to be harmful to personal, educational and professional success (Hall, 1998). Individuals with this condition fail because they have difficulties expressing themselves in written language. The causes of writer's block should be determined and studies should examine the factors that lead students to develop writer's block both in classroom contexts and in contexts outside the classroom.

This study has some limitations in terms of both the study group and grade level. Future research can be carried out with different samples containing various grade levels. Additionally, experimental and qualitative paradigms studies can be carried out related to the problems in the current study. Especially, longitudinal studies can be conducted in order to obtain more comprehensive results intended for the results of affective factors on writing success.

References

- Ajzen, I. (1989). Attitude structure and behavior. In A. Pratkanis, S. J. Breckler, & A. G. Greenwald (Eds.). *Attitude Structure and Function* (pp. 241-274). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Ajzen, I., & Fishbein, M. (1977). Attitude-behavior relations: A theoretical analysis and review of empirical research. *Psychological bulletin*, 84(5), 888.
- Almerico, G., Johnston, P., Henriott, D., & Shapiro, M. (2011). Dispositions assessment in teacher education: developing an assessment instrument for the college classroom and the field. *Research in Higher Education Journal*, 11, 1-19.
- Baş, G., & Şahin, C. (2012). İlköğretim öğrencilerinin okuma tutumları, yazma eğilimleri ile Türkçe dersindeki akademik başarıları arasındaki ilişki. *Turkish Studies*, 7(3), 555-572.
- Baş, G., & Şahin, C. (2013). İlköğretim öğrencilerinin yazma eğilimlerinin farklı değişkenler açısından incelenmesi. *Sakarya University Journal of Education*, 3(1), 32-42.
- Baştuğ, M. (2014). Öğrencilerin Türkçe dersi başarı notu oluşturulma şeklinin dil becerileri açısından incelenmesi: bir eksiklik olabilir mi? K. İşeri, G. Çetinkaya, T. Çelik, S. Demirgüneş, T. Daşöz, & Y. Gençer (Eds.). *Türkçe Eğitiminde Kuramsal ve Uygulamalı Çalışmalar*. Ankara: Pegem Akademi.
- Baysal, Z. N., Duman, M., Arkan, K., & Hastürk, E. (2012). Probleme Dayalı Öğrenme Yaklaşımının Öğrencilerin Görsel Sunu ve Yazma Eğilimlerine Etkisi. *Uluslararası Eğitim Programları ve Öğretim Çalışmaları Dergisi*, 2(4), 78-90.
- Boice, R. (1993). Writing Blocks and Tacit Knowledge. *Journal of Higher Education*, 64(1), 19-54.
- Boscolo, P. (2008). Writing in Primary School. In C. Bazerman (Ed). *Handbook of Research on Writing History, Society, School, Individual, Text* (pp. 359-380). New York, NY Taylor & Francis Group, LLC.
- Buss, D. M. ve Craik, K. H. (1983). The Act Frequency Approach to Personality. *Psychological Review* 84, 105-126.
- Byrne, B. M. (2010). *Structural Equation Modeling with AMOS Basic Concepts, Applications, and Programming* (2nd. ed.). New York, NY: Taylor & Francis Group.
- Corbett, J. (1998, 1 April). Narrating difference: a cross-cultural approach to writer's block. Paper presented at the at the Conference on College Composition and Communication, Chicago, IL. Retrieved <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=ED420058&lang=tr&site=ehost-live>.
- Cothorn, N. B., & Collins, M. D. (1992). An exploration: attitude acquisition and reading instruction. *Reading Research and Instruction*, 31(2), 84-97.
- Cunningham, D. D. (2008). Literacy environment quality in preschool and children's attitudes toward reading and writing. *Literacy, Teaching and Learning*, 12(2), 19-36.
- Çetin, F., & Fıkrkoca, A. (2010). Rol ötesi olumlu davranışlar kişisel ve tutumsal faktörlerle öngörülebilir mi? *Ankara Üniversitesi Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi Dergisi*, 65(4), 41-66.
- Eagly, A. H., & Chaiken, S. (1993). *The Psychology of Attitudes*. Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Erdoğan, T. (2013). The effect of creative drama method on pre-service classroom teachers' writing skills and attitudes towards writing. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 38(1), 44-61.
- Freedman, J. L., Sears, D. O., & Carlsmith, J. M. (1989). *Sosyal Psikoloji A. Dönmez* (Trans.). İstanbul: Ara Yayıncılık.
- Gallavan, N. P., Bowles, F. A., & Young, C. T. (2007). Learning to write and writing to learn: insights from teacher candidates. *Action in Teacher Education*, 29(2), 61-69.
- Göçer, A. (2013). Türkçe öğretmeni adaylarına göre yazma becerisinin ediniminde ve gelişiminde etkili olan unsurlar. *Mustafa Kemal Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 10(24), 1-14.

- Graham, S., Berninger, V., & Fan, W. (2007). The Structural relationship between writing attitude and writing achievement in first and third grade students. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 32(3), 516-536.
- Graham, S., Schwartz, S. S., & MacArthur, C. A. (1993). Knowledge of writing and the composing process, attitude toward writing, and self-efficacy for students with and without learning disabilities. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 26(4), 237-249.
- Hall, B. A. (1998). *Writer's block: Research, past remediation, and recommendations for future treatment* (Unpublished master's thesis). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Full Text database (UMI No: 1393002). Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/304484249?accountid=16645>
- Hawthorne, J. (2010). *The effects of the delivery style of teacher feedback on the writing self-efficacy and dispositions of young students* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Full Text database (UMI No: 3458703). Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/872940534?accountid=16645>
- Huston, P. (1998). Resolving writer's block. *Canadian Family Physician*, 44, 92-97.
- İşeri, K. (2010). Evaluation of the writing disposition of elementary school sixth grade students. *New Educational Review*, 22(3-4), 295-305.
- İşeri, K., & Ünal, E. (2010). Yazma eğilimi ölçeği'nin türkçeye uyarlanması. *Eğitim ve Bilim*, 35(155), 104-117.
- Karasar, N. (2005). *Bilimsel araştırma yöntemi*. Ankara: Nobel Yayın Dağıtım.
- Karatay, H. (2011). Süreç temelli yazma modelleri: Planlı yazma ve değerlendirme. In M. Özbay (Ed.) *Yazma Eğitimi içinde* (pp. 21-40). Ankara: Pegem Akademi Yayıncılık.
- Katz, L. G. (1993). *Dispositions: Definitions and Implications for Early Childhood Practices*. Available from ERIC/EECE. Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED360104.pdf>.
- Kear, D. J., Coffman, G. A., McKenna, M. C., & Ambrosio, A. L. (2000). Measuring attitude toward writing: a new tool for teachers. *Reading Teacher*, 54(1), 10-23.
- Kırmızı, F. S. (2009). Türkçe dersinde yaratıcı drama yöntemine dayalı yaratıcı yazma çalışmalarının yazmaya yönelik tutuma etkisi. *Yaratıcı Drama Dergisi*, 4(7), 51-67.
- Knudson, R. E. (1992). Developmental and application of a writing attitude survey for grades 1 to 3. *Psychological Reports*, 70(3), 711.
- Knudson, R. E. (1993). Development of a writing attitude survey for Grades 9 to 12: Effects of gender, grade, and. *Psychological Reports*, 73(2), 587.
- Knudson, R. E. (1995). Writing experiences, attitudes, and achievement of first to sixth graders. *Journal of Educational Research*, 89(2), 90-97.
- Lee, J. (2013). Can Writing Attitudes and Learning Behavior Overcome Gender Difference in Writing? Evidence from NAEP. *Written Communication*, 30(2), 164-193.
- McClenny, C. S. (2010). A disposition to write: Relationships with writing performance (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Full Text database (UMI No: 3458714). Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/871897604?accountid=16645>
- McKenna, M. C., Kear, D. J., & Elisworth, R. A. (1995). Children's attitudes toward reading: A national survey. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 30(4), 934-956.
- McLeod, S. H. (1997). *Notes on the heart: Affective issues in the writing classroom*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Miller, K. M. (2010). *Stranger than fiction: A study of student perceptions of writer's block and film in the composition classroom* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation), Indiana University of Pennsylvania. Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Full Text database. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/749927758?accountid=16645>

- Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı (MEB). (2005). *İlköğretim Türkçe Öğretim Programı ve Kılavuzu (1-5. Sınıflar)*. Ankara: Devlet Kitapları Müdürlüğü Basım Evi.
- Notar, C. E. (2009). Dispositions: Ability and assessment. *International Journal of Education*, 1(1), 1-14.
- Özbay, M., & Zorbaz, K. Z. (2012). İlköğretim ikinci kademe öğrencilerinin yazma tutukluğu düzeyleri üzerine bir değerlendirme. *Türkiye Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi*, 16(1), 47-72.
- Özkara, Y. (2007). *6+1 analitik yazma ve değerlendirme modelinin 5. sınıf öğrencilerinin hikâye edici metin yazma becerilerini geliştirmeye etkisi* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Gazi University, Institute of Educational Science, Ankara.
- Pajares, F. (2003). Self-efficacy beliefs, motivation, and achievement in writing: a review of the literature. *Reading & Writing Quarterly*, 19(2), 139.
- Peterson, K. E. (1987). *Relationships among measures of writer's block, writing anxiety, and procrastination* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Full Text database (UMI No: 8717700). Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/303585044?accountid=16645>
- Piazza, C. L., & Siebert, C. F. (2008). Development and validation of a writing dispositions scale for elementary and middle school students. *Journal of Educational Research*, 101(5), 275-286.
- Poff, S. I. (2004). *Regimentation: A predictor of writer's block and writing apprehension* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Full Text database (UMI No: 3155461). Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/305121235?accountid=16645>
- Rahilly, M. K. (2004). *Affective, literacy, and cultural influences on the development of English composition skills: Perceptions and experiences of adult ESL students in academic ESL writing programs* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Full Text database (UMI No: 3123123). Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/305049445?accountid=16645>
- Rogers, L. A., & Graham, S. (2008). A meta-analysis of single subject design writing intervention Research. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 100(4), 879-906.
- Rose, M. (1980). Rigid rules, inflexible plans, and the stifling of language: a cognitivist analysis of writer's block. *College Composition and Communication*, 31(4), 389-401. doi:10.2307/356589
- Rose, M. (1981). Questionnaire for Identifying Writer's Block (QIWB). Available from ERIC Document Reproduction Service (No. ED 236 652). Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED236652.pdf>.
- Rose, M. (1983). *Cognitive Dimension of Writer's Block*. Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University. (Eric Reproduction Service No. ED230932). Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED230932.pdf>.
- Rose, M. (1984). Writer's Block: The Cognitive Dimension. Studies in Writing & Rhetoric. Paper presented at the *Composition Communication*, Urbana I. L. Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED248527.pdf>
- Schermelleh-Engel, K., Moosbrugger, H. ve Müller, H. (2003). Evaluating the fit of structural equation models: Tests of significance and descriptive goodness-of-fit measures. *Methods of Psychological Research Online*, 8(2), 23-74.
- Schultz, D. M. (2009). *Eloquent Science: A Practical Guide to Becoming a Better Writer, Speaker and Atmospheric Scientist*. Boston, MA: American Meteorological Society
- Schultz, K., & Fecho, B. (2000). Society's Child: Social Context and Writing Development. *Educational Psychologist*, 35(1), 51-62. doi:10.1207/s15326985ep3501_6
- Schunk, D. H., & Swartz, C. W. (1993). Writing strategy instruction with gifted students: Effects of goals and feedback on self-efficacy. *Roeper Review*, 15(4), 225.

- Sever, E., & Memiş, A. (2013). Süreç temelli yazma modellerinin ilköğretim dördüncü sınıf öğrencilerinin yazım-noktalama becerisine ve yazma eğilimine etkisi. *Karadeniz Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 5(9), 243-259.
- Şencan, H. (2005). *Sosyal ve Davranışsal Ölçmelerde Güvenirlik ve Geçerlilik*. Ankara: Seçkin Yayınları.
- Şimşek, Ö. F. (2007). *Yapısal Eşitlik Modellemesine Giriş Temel İlkeler ve Lisrel Uygulamaları*. Ankara: Ekinoks.
- Temur, T. (2004, 6-9 July). İlköğretim beşinci sınıf öğrencilerinin yazılı anlatım beceri düzeyleri ile okul başarıları arasındaki ilişki. *XIII. Ulusal Eğitim Bilimleri Kurultayı*, İnönü University, Malatya. Retrieved from <https://www.pegem.net/dosyalar/dokuman/316.pdf>.
- Troia, G. A., Harbaugh, A., Shankland, R., Wolbers, K., & Lawrence, A. (2013). Relationships between writing motivation, writing activity, and writing performance: effects of grade, sex, and ability. *Reading and Writing*, 26(1), 17-44. doi:10.1007/s11145-012-9379-2.
- Troia, G. A., Shankland, R. K., & Wolbers, K. A. (2012). Motivation Research in Writing: Theoretical and Empirical Considerations. *Reading & Writing Quarterly*, 28(1), 5-28. doi:10.1080/10573569.2012.632729.
- Tüfekçioğlu, B. (2010). Yazma Becerisinin Bazı Değişkenler Açısından İncelenmesi. *Dil Dergisi*, 149, 30-45.
- Türk Dil Kurumu (TDK). (2005). *Türk Dil Kurumu Büyük Türkçe Sözlük*. Ankara: Türk Dil Kurumu Yayınları.
- Uçgun, D. (2014). Altıncı Sınıf Öğrencilerinin Yazma Eğilimlerinin İncelenmesi. *Eğitim ve Bilim*, 39(175), 227-238. doi:10.15390/EB.2014.1176.
- Ungan, S. (2007). Yazma Becerisinin Geliştirilmesi ve Önemi. *Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 23(2), 461-462.
- Ünal, E. (2010). An analysis of the writing disposition of fourth and fifth grade elementary school pupils. *Education*, 131(2), 319-330.
- Voss, M. M. (2003). Building self-belief: a child overcomes writer's block. *Reading & Writing Quarterly*, 19(4), 347-361. doi:10.1080/10573560390226056