

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the research background, research questions, research purpose, research significance, practical Significance, scope, conceptual framework, and relevant previous studies.

A. Research Background

Writing is one of the fundamental skills in learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL), especially for students in junior high school. It is not only a medium of communication but also a crucial aspect of academic performance, as it reflects learners' mastery of grammar, vocabulary, coherence, and organization of ideas (Harmer, 2004). However, among the four language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—writing is often considered the most difficult by EFL students, particularly young learners at the junior high school level (Nunan, 2003; Utami, 2021). Tarigan (2008:3) defines writing skills as one of the productive and expressive language skills used to communicate indirectly and not in a face-to-face manner with other parties. Also, Troyka in Lauri (2011:12) states that writing is a way of communicating a message to a reader for a purpose. The purposes of writing are to express oneself, to provide information to persuade, and to create a literary work.

In Indonesian junior high schools, writing remains a challenging skill for students to master. Many students struggle with generating ideas, using appropriate vocabulary, and organizing their writing coherently. According to Fauziati (2019), this struggle often stems from a lack of confidence, limited vocabulary, and minimal exposure to authentic writing tasks. Furthermore, writing activities in EFL classrooms are frequently delivered in a traditional, teacher-centered manner, which does not engage students effectively. As a result, students tend to feel bored and disengaged during writing lessons (Suryani, 2020).

One of the main issues observed in the classroom is the lack of student engagement in writing activities. Engagement is crucial because it directly affects students' motivation and willingness to participate in learning tasks (Fredricks et al., 2004). When students are not engaged, they are less likely to invest effort in their learning, which negatively affects their writing development. In this context, it becomes important to explore alternative teaching strategies that can foster active participation and enthusiasm among young learners.

To cope with this issue, many educators have explored the use of cooperative learning methods, one of which is the Team Games Tournament (TGT) model. TGT is a structured cooperative learning strategy developed by Slavin (1995) that combines academic learning with game-like elements. It consists of five stages: class presentation, team study, games, tournament, and team recognition. This model promotes student engagement by encouraging collaboration, friendly competition, and accountability (Slavin, 1995; Suprijono, 2014).

These elements naturally attract students' interest, stimulate participation, and reduce anxiety. By involving students in teams and turning writing into a dynamic game-based process, TGT transforms writing into an enjoyable activity rather than a stressful task. This makes it highly appropriate for coping with disengagement issues in junior high EFL classrooms.

Previous studies have shown that the Teams Games Tournament (TGT) model can effectively enhance students' motivation and academic performance. For example, Wahyuningsih (2022) found that the use of TGT in teaching descriptive writing at SMP Negeri 1 Babat significantly increased students' interest and writing performance. Similarly, Astuti and Pramudiani (2020) reported that TGT not only improved students' writing scores but also promoted teamwork and created a positive classroom atmosphere. Another study by Yuliawati and Widarta (2023), entitled "The

Implementation of TGT Learning Model to Increase Learning Motivation," indicated that TGT enhanced students' motivation in English classes at SMAN 1 Petang. The qualitative data revealed that the game-based approach made students more active and enthusiastic in the learning process. The similarity among these studies is their use of the TGT model in English language learning and their findings that TGT improves student motivation and participation. The difference lies in the focus and context: previous studies mainly emphasized general motivation and were conducted in senior high school settings, while the current study specifically explores student engagement in writing skills among junior high school EFL learners. The gap is that most prior research has concentrated on academic outcomes or general motivation, without deeply examining students' multi-dimensional engagement, emotional, behavioral, and cognitive, during writing tasks, especially in the context of young EFL learners.

In light of this gap, the current study is to investigate how the TGT model might be used to involve young EFL learners in writing instruction at SMPN 8 Bandung. This research is expected to contribute to the body of knowledge on cooperative learning and provide practical insights for English teachers in designing more engaging and effective writing lessons.

B. Research Questions

Based on the study's background, two research questions are developed, as outlined below.

1. How does the TGT (Team Games Tournament) model engage EFL young learners behaviorally, emotionally, and cognitively in learning writing skills?
2. What are students' perceptions of learning writing through the TGT model?

C. Research Purposes

Based on the study's background, two research purposes are developed, as outlined below.

1. To explore the Team Games Tournament (TGT) model engages EFL young learners in learning writing skills.

This includes examining how the TGT model fosters students' emotional, behavioral, and cognitive engagement during writing activities in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom.

2. To explore students' perceptions of learning writing through the TGT model.

The study seeks to understand how students respond to, experience, and interpret writing lessons conducted using the TGT approach.

D. Research Significances

In the realm of English language education, this study is important, especially when it comes to teaching writing to young students. In EFL classes, writing is frequently seen as a difficult ability to teach and learn, particularly for junior high school students who are still honing their language skills. By emphasizing involvement, which is a crucial component of effective learning, this study advances our knowledge of how alternative teaching approaches, such as TGT, might improve the classroom setting.

1. Practical Significance

For EFL teachers, this study may offer a practical and innovative teaching strategy that can make writing lessons more engaging, interactive, and student-centered. It can serve as a reference for designing writing activities that reduce student anxiety and encourage participation.

For students, through the implementation of TGT, students may experience a more enjoyable and less stressful learning process. Working in teams and participating in academic games may help boost their motivation, confidence, and willingness to express their ideas in writing.

For school administrators and curriculum designers, this research may highlight the importance of including active learning and cooperative strategies in language syllabi to enhance the overall quality of English instruction.

For researchers, the findings may serve as a foundation for further research on cooperative learning models and their impact on various language skills, especially in different levels of education and cultural contexts.

2. Theoretical Significance

Theoretically, this study contributes to the field of English language teaching by enriching the discussion on student engagement in EFL writing classrooms. Grounded in the student engagement framework proposed by Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris (2004), this research provides empirical evidence that emotional, behavioral, and cognitive engagement can be fostered through cooperative learning models such as Team Games Tournament (TGT).

Furthermore, this study supports Slavin's (1995) cooperative learning theory, which emphasizes the importance of teamwork, positive interdependence, and structured competition in promoting active student involvement. By applying TGT in teaching procedure texts, this research extends existing theories by demonstrating how cooperative learning principles operate in a writing context for young EFL learners.

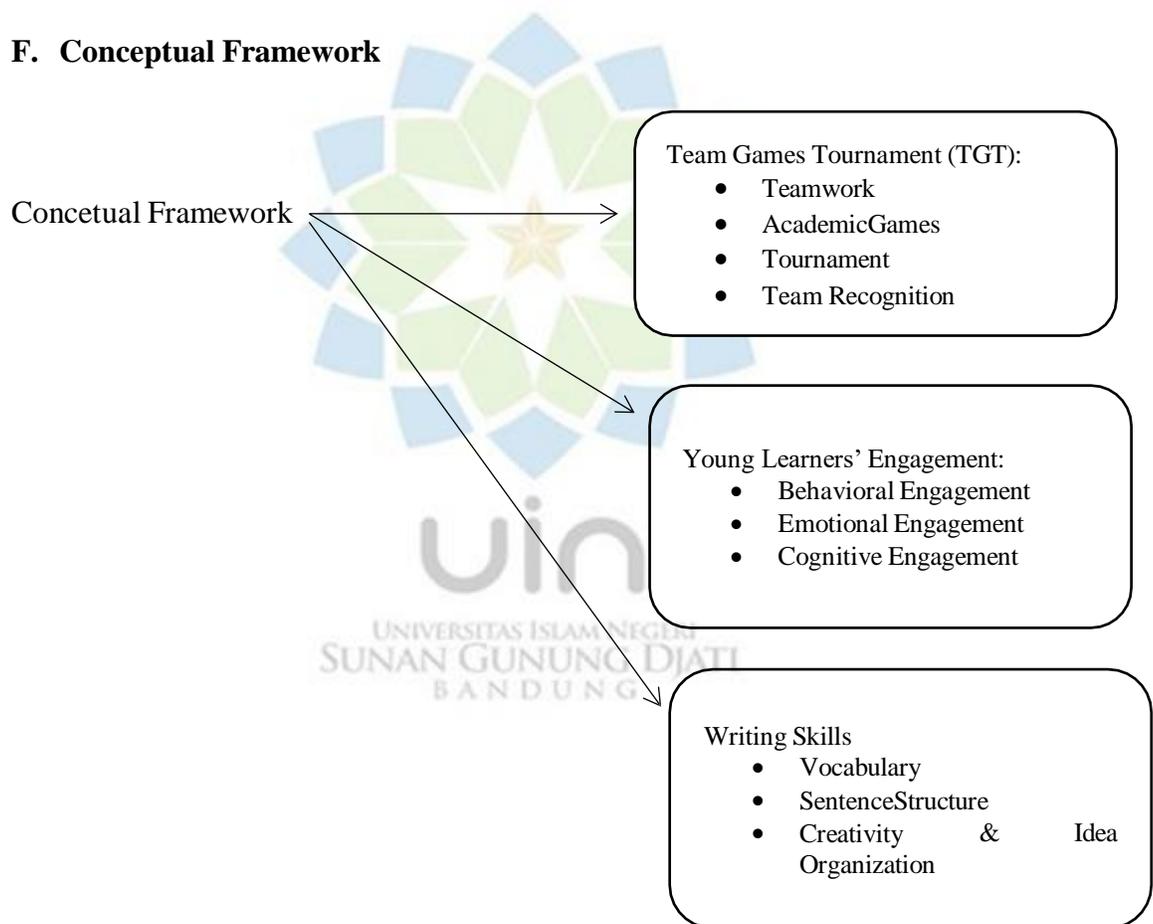
The findings also contribute to writing pedagogy theories by highlighting that engaging learning environments play a crucial role in reducing anxiety and supporting students' willingness to express ideas in written form, particularly in EFL contexts.

E. Research Scope

This research was conducted at SMPN 8 Bandung with seventh-grade students during the 2025/ 2026 academic year. It focuses specifically on the use of the Team Games Tournament (TGT) model in writing classes. The scope of the research is limited to:

1. Student engagement which includes emotional (interest, enjoyment), behavioral (participation, cooperation), and cognitive (focus, understanding) aspects.
2. Students' perceptions and experiences, rather than quantifiable writing outcomes such as test scores or rubric-based assessments.
3. Qualitative data, collected through observation, interviews, and student reflections, without statistical analysis.

F. Conceptual Framework



Writing is an extremely complex cognitive activity in which the writer is required to demonstrate control of variables simultaneously (Nunan, 2003). It requires students to organize ideas, apply grammar and vocabulary correctly, and express thoughts coherently (Hyland, 2003). For young EFL learners, writing can be even more

challenging due to their limited vocabulary, developing cognitive abilities, and lack of motivation. These factors often lead to disengagement, anxiety, and low achievement in writing classrooms (Nation, 2009).

Study explains how the Team Game Tournament (TGT) model influences young learners' engagement in learning to write and improves their writing skills. The framework focuses on the relationships between the learning model, student engagement, and writing skills. The TGT model, as an instructional strategy and independent variable, is a cooperative learning method that combines teamwork and competition. The model involves dividing students into teams, engaging them in writing-related games and activities, and rewarding performance based on individual and group contributions. This approach is designed to create an interactive and competitive environment that encourages higher levels of student engagement.

Team Games Tournament (TGT) is a cooperative learning model developed by Robert Slavin that combines teamwork, academic learning, and friendly competition to increase student engagement and learning outcomes. The model is rooted in cooperative learning theory, which emphasizes collaboration among students of



varying abilities to achieve a common goal. Through TGT, students work in heterogeneous groups, which encourages peer interaction, which is consistent with Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) theory. The approach also incorporates elements of behaviorist motivation by using rewards to reinforce learning and constructivist principles that encourage active participation in building knowledge. TGT is implemented through five main components: class presentations, teamwork, games, tournaments, and team recognition. The teacher begins by presenting the material, followed by group activities in which students collaborate to deepen their understanding. Students then engage in academic games during the tournament, competing against peers of similar skill levels and contributing points to their teams. At the end, teams are recognized based on their performance, which fosters motivation and a sense of collective accomplishment. In the context of writing, TGT enhances creativity and skill development by providing a supportive and engaging environment, motivating students to actively participate while improving their writing skills through collaboration and competition.

Young learners' engagement, which serves as the mediating variable, is characterized by increased participation, enthusiasm, and focus during writing activities. Active engagement encouraged by the TGT model is expected to increase students' motivation and commitment to learning. This increased engagement is expected to result in improved writing outcomes, the dependent variable, including progress in grammar, vocabulary use, sentence structure, and creativity.

Young Learners' engagement plays a critical role in overcoming these barriers. According to Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris (2004), engagement in learning has three dimensions:

1. Behavioral engagement (participation, effort),
2. Emotional engagement (interest, enjoyment), and
3. Cognitive engagements (deep thinking, mental investment).

When students are engaged, they are more likely to invest effort in learning tasks and achieve better outcomes. Therefore, increasing engagement is essential to

support writing development in young learners.

To enhance engagement, this study implements the Team Games Tournament (TGT) model developed by Slavin (1995) as part of the cooperative learning approach. TGT integrates academic content, teamwork, and game-based competition. Students work in diverse teams, study materials together, and compete in fun academic tournaments. Research has shown that TGT can promote social interaction, build motivation, reduce writing anxiety, and increase active participation (Slavin, 2011; Gillies, 2016).

The process of implementing the TGT model in a writing classroom involves several stages: integrating structured games and competition, encouraging teamwork and active participation, developing engagement and motivation, and ultimately improving students' writing performance. The underlying assumption of this framework is that TGT will create a positive and enjoyable learning environment that motivates students to actively participate, and that engaged learners are more likely to focus on improving their writing skills.

The framework highlights the role of the TGT model as an instructional tool and engagement strategy, addressing the challenges young learners face in developing writing skills. The framework provides a clear basis for research, emphasizing the relationship between TGT implementation, increased engagement, and improved writing performance.

G. Previous Study

Several studies have explored the effectiveness of the Team Games Tournament (TGT) model in improving students' writing skills, but many of them focused primarily on academic outcomes rather than the complex process of student engagement. Wahyuningsih (2022) investigated whether the TGT model was effective in improving junior high school students' writing skills. The study found that students showed increased interest and performance in writing descriptive texts. However, the study focused more on the final writing outcomes rather than the

process of student engagement. Similarly, Astuti and Pramudiani (2020) explored the impact of TGT on students' writing skills and classroom collaboration. Their results showed that TGT improved writing scores and created a more positive and cooperative classroom atmosphere. However, their study did not specifically address the emotional, behavioral, and cognitive dimensions of engagement in EFL writing classes for young learners. Ramadhani et al. (2024) asked the question of whether the TGT method affected ninth-grade students' ability to write procedural texts. Their quasi-experimental study showed that students in the experimental class outperformed students in the control group in post-test scores.

While this supports the effectiveness of TGT in improving writing skills, the study focused on academic outcomes and did not investigate in detail the process of student engagement. In another study, Sulastrri and Arifin (2024) examined how a combination of mind mapping techniques and TGT affected students' report writing skills. The findings revealed positive student responses, increased self-confidence, and stronger collaboration. However, the multi-method approach made it difficult to isolate the specific impacts of TGT, and the study did not explore engagement holistically across emotional, behavioral, and cognitive aspects.

Yuliawati and Widarta (2023) examined how the TGT model can improve students' motivation in an English language classroom. The study revealed increased class enthusiasm and student activity. However, the study did not focus on writing skills, nor did it examine the three-dimensional nature of engagement. Overall, while these studies confirm the benefits of TGT, they tend to emphasize learning outcomes or general motivation. Therefore, the current study fills a significant gap by investigating how the TGT model engages young EFL learners emotionally, behaviorally, and cognitively in writing activities. Overall, while these studies confirm the benefits of TGT, they tend to emphasize learning outcomes or general motivation.

In international contexts, several studies have also highlighted the potential of cooperative learning models,

including TGT, in enhancing student engagement and writing development. Slavin (2015), as the originator of the Team Games Tournament model, emphasized that TGT promotes active participation, responsibility, and positive interdependence among students, which are key elements of behavioral and emotional engagement. His findings suggest that learning through structured games and teamwork increases students' motivation and sustained involvement in academic tasks, including language learning activities.

Similarly, Gillies (2016) examined cooperative learning in EFL classrooms and found that students working in structured group activities demonstrated higher levels of cognitive engagement, particularly in problem-solving and idea development during writing tasks. Students were more willing to share ideas, negotiate meaning, and revise their writing collaboratively, indicating deeper mental involvement in the learning process. However, the study discussed cooperative learning in general and did not specifically focus on the TGT model or explicitly categorize engagement into emotional, behavioral, and cognitive dimensions.

Furthermore, Tran and Lewis (2012) investigated the effects of cooperative learning on students' engagement and academic performance in language classrooms. Their findings revealed that cooperative learning strategies fostered positive emotions, increased participation, and improved critical thinking skills. Although the study showed strong evidence of multidimensional engagement, it did not specifically examine writing skills nor focus on young EFL learners.

In addition, Mercer and Dörnyei (2020) emphasized that student engagement in language learning is a dynamic and multidimensional process influenced by classroom interaction, peer collaboration, and meaningful tasks. Their work supports the idea that game-based cooperative models such as TGT can create emotionally supportive environments, encourage active participation, and stimulate cognitive effort. However, their research remained theoretical and did not empirically investigate TGT in writing classrooms.

Overall, international studies support the effectiveness of cooperative and game-based learning in promoting

student engagement and language development. Nevertheless, similar to local studies, many of these investigations either focus on general cooperative learning, motivation, or learning outcomes, rather than examining how the TGT model specifically engages young EFL learners emotionally, behaviorally, and cognitively during writing activities. Therefore, the present study extends previous research by providing an in-depth qualitative exploration of student engagement within the TGT model in an EFL writing context.

Therefore, the current study fills a significant gap by investigating how the TGT model engages young EFL learners emotionally, behaviorally, and cognitively in writing activities.

