

## **EFL Students' Perspectives on the Use of Blog towards Their Writing Performance**

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**Abstract:** Obtaining English Foreign Language (EFL) students' views dealing with their blog preferences to assist their writing skills in practice is needed to make them more helpful in writing practice. This research aimed at finding out a significant correlation between students' perspectives on the use of blogs in a writing activity and their writing performance. It is a correlational study that correlates two variables: blog use and writing performance. The result of this research showed that there was no significant correlation between the students' perception of blog use in writing activities with their writing performances. Although the students had a high and positive perception toward blog use in writing activities done by the teacher in the class, it did not give a high response to the students' writing performance. It happened because some extraneous and possible factors may influence the result of this research. Finally, this research is expected to contribute towards enriching teaching approach knowledge in writing.

**Keywords:** *Blog, Perception, Writing, Writing performance.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Building students capacity in English skill is needed to strengthen their linguistic skill. Writing is one of skill that should be taught to students in any variations of teaching strategy so that the students have writing experiences. Writing experiences will be rich when the teaching approach varies based on need (Wenjuan & Rui, 2016). The approach of teaching writing is the strategy that can be applied to achieve the writing goal. When the goal of writing is for students' achievement in

writing an essay, it is necessary to consider how effective the approach is used to create students' competence in writing an essay (Alodwan & Ibnian, 2014). Enhancing blog to the process of teaching writing can be considered the alternative media to replace the role of approach, and a number of researches dealing with the use of blog have been conducted.

In Vurdien's research (2013), blogs can motivate students to build their writing skills through self-reflection and peer feedback. The blog is the interesting media for students

because they can share and write about their experiences. The engagement in the negotiation of meaning between peers led to better planning and the choice of the right register/style required in each task prior to writing and submitting their work. They can check each other what mistake is in writing. Checking each other by learning together livens the learning situation conducive and positive. Collaborative skills were also fostered through students' regular interaction in the blogs in which they attend for learning together. For meaningful learning to take place, pedagogical intervention could encourage students to take their peers' comments into account so that they can edit their own work with a view to enhancing their writing tasks and producing mistake-free texts.

In line with Vurdien, Huang's research (2016) confirms that the teacher and students had a positive attitude towards the blog task and may indicate that blogging is a useful alternative approach but may also be regularly incorporated in writing classes to enhance EFL writing motivation. It means that blog assists the process of teaching writing. Zhou (2015) also gives confirmation that blog-assisted EFL process writing had significantly improved students' writing ability. In addition, most of the participants adopted a positive attitude towards this writing model which proved to have played an active role in solving the problems that might arise in the practice of traditional EFL writing teaching. It is strengthened by Shen (2013) that blog integrated writing instruction resulted in better writing performance. It means that sample blogs and commentaries to these blogs would be investigated to see some meritorious characteristics and experiences that support blogging as an effective activity in developing and improving writing performance (Nepomuceno, 2011). Ines and Artvianti (2013) state that the classroom blog had its strengths and challenges. Classroom blog enabled the students to: (1) have a fun learning environment; (2) write easily; (3) get feedback

from teacher and peers; (4) discuss more with friends and teacher outside classroom easily; (5) access more reference for students' writing; (6) get more motivation to write; (7) have their personal space to read and write in a community; and (8) build their analytical and critical thinking skill. There were also some challenges faced by the students, as follows: (1) technical problems; (2) time management; (3) students' inability to point out mistakes done by their peers; and (4) plagiarism. Overall, the use of a classroom blog created positive effects on the students' writing fluency. It is line with what Arslan and Şahin-Kizil (2010) said that blog-integrated writing instruction might have resulted in a greater improvement in students' writing performance than merely in-class writing instruction.

A blog can serve as a place to publish one's writing or used as a forum for receiving feedback on writing. Students can write collaboratively or serve as mentors as they draft, revise, and edit their writing collaboratively in a virtual environment. Integrating blogging into classroom writing instruction can engage students and motivate them to participate more fully in the writing process (Lacina & Griffith, 2012).

In language learning, the blog has been experimentally used as tools to develop writing and reading comprehension skills. The implications indicate that although blogging should not replace face-to-face interaction, it may provide a practice environment where students can think, reflect, and create language slowly for a real-life audience (Pinkman, 2005). It means that the blog should be viewed as the space for the students in generating their ideas, formulate them into texts, and their peers can check each other. Peer learning in writing through blog functions to share their writing experiences, starting from how to determine the topic sentence, supporting sentences, and a concluding paragraph.

Considering that there are many advantages the students have in using a blog to publish their writing, it is expected that they also perform positive perspectives toward the use of it. There some previous studies conducted by other researchers on the effective use of a blog for writing activities. Said et al. (2013) conducted a study to investigate the students' perception of the use of blog to enhance writing skill. The result of their studies showed that the investigated students had positive perception on the use of blog to polish their writing skills and they had also portrayed a positive attitude in using a blog to improve writing skills. Most of the students agreed to vary degrees that writing on the blog had made them use academic writing style and register correctly, apart from training them to choose the correct sentence and paragraph structure, decide on their word choice and spelling cautiously, check on their grammar and revise their style of presenting their arguments in writing.

Based on the considerations in which a number of researches dealing with blog use to writing talk about how the blog is used to teaching writing, however, this study is intended to find out the correlation between English Foreign Language (EFL) students' perspectives on the use of blog in writing activities and their writing performances. If the students feel that the blog is beneficial and effective for them in learning of writing, this condition should be followed by the better achievement they perform in writing. It indicates that the students' who have a positive point of view on the use of blog in learning writing will be followed by their positive achievement in their writing activities and writing performances.

Otherwise, another previous study showed a different thing. Özdemir and Aydın (2015)' who conducted a study on the effect of blogging toward students' writing achievement showed that the use of blogs does not guarantee

better writing achievement among students. They mentioned that the teacher should create a writing environment in which they encourage students to write in the target language to increase their writing achievement. This indicates that the positive perceptions of students on the use of the blog do not always follow by their writing achievement better.

Since there are two different results showed by those previous researchers, this study would like to prove whether there is a significant correlation between students' perspective on the use blog in a writing activity and their writing performance or not. In other words, the researcher would like to investigate and examine whether the EFL students who have positive perspectives on the use of blogs in the writing activities perform better on their writing achievement, and vice versa. In general, it is hypothesized that there is a significant correlation between students' perspective on the use blog in a writing activity and writing performance. In order to support this investigation, the researchers formulated two hypotheses under this research:

1. Null hypothesis (H0):  
There is no correlation between EFL students' perspective on the use of blog in writing activities and writing performances.
2. The alternative hypothesis (H1):  
There is a positive correlation between EFL students' perspective on the use of blog in writing activities and writing performances.

## **METHOD**

This research is correlational design in which it aims at examining whether there is a correlation between EFL students' perspective on the use of blog in writing activities and writing performances. It was conducted in the English Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Lambung Mangkurat University. The subject is students who took writing II or intermediate writing with the syllabus of enhancing students to paragraph and paragraph

development. There were 23 students in one class taken as the sample, and the sampling technique is purposive sampling because it was considered that the students can be the representative sample to prove whether there is a significant correlation between students' perspective on the use blog in a writing activity and their writing performance or not.

There were two instruments used in this research. The first one was a questionnaire used to obtain the students' perception of dealing with the students' knowledge and experiences in blog use as long as the teaching process of writing took place. Likert scale was used to find out the students' perspective ranging from "very effective, effective, ineffective, and very ineffective". Those indicators were used to collect and to map the distribution of students' perspective. The second one tested or writing performance test used to find out the students' performance in writing and the rubric used is an analytic score based on content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics. From score per component, it is calculated by adding four component scores into overall (Yamanishi, Ono, & Hijikata, 2019; Beyrelî & Ari, 2009).

The two instruments were conducted after the teaching process of writing through blog took place. Because this teaching process took place based on the schedule from the academic calendar, the questionnaire was distributed in the fourteenth meeting, and the writing performance test was conducted in the sixteenth meeting.

In order to measure the correlation level, Pearson Product Moment formula developed by Karl Pearson was conducted. The data analysis deals with checking the result of questionnaire and giving a score for each item and total score for each student, then calculating the total score of the whole items; checking the result of students' writing performances and calculating the total of writing a score for the whole students; tabulating the questionnaire result and writing a score to describe the total for each

instrument. The questionnaire results were symbolized as variable X, and the students' writing scores were symbolized as variable Y, and computing the coefficient correlation of both variables by using the following formula:

$$\frac{N \sum XY - (\sum X)(\sum Y)}{\sqrt{[N \sum X^2 - (\sum X)^2][N \sum Y^2 - (\sum Y)^2]}}$$

where:

- $\sum X$  = the total score of students' perception on the use of blog in writing activities and writing performances
- $\sum Y$  = the total score of students' writing performances derived from the writing test
- $\sum X^2$  = the total score of the square of students' perception on the use of blog in writing activities
- $\sum Y^2$  = the total score of a square of students' writing performances
- $\sum XY$  = the total of multiplication between the score of students' perception on the use of blog in writing activities and students' writing performances
- N = the number of subjects/ students
- r = the coefficient correlation between two variables (calculated r)

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

Findings of this research cover three areas. They are the result of students' perceptions on the use of blogs in writing, the result of students' writing achievement, and the correlation result of both of them.

#### *1. The Result of Students' Perceptions on the use of Blogs in Writing*

As mentioned in the previous section, obtaining the data being related to what students feel about the use of blog in learning writing is

carried out by administering the questionnaire. In this case, the researcher concludes the result of the questionnaire into six essential parts representing the students' perception about that. First of all, figure 1 describes the students'

responses toward the question that ask them related to the effectiveness of blog for them in learning writing.

**Figure 1. Blog is Effective Media in Learning Writing**

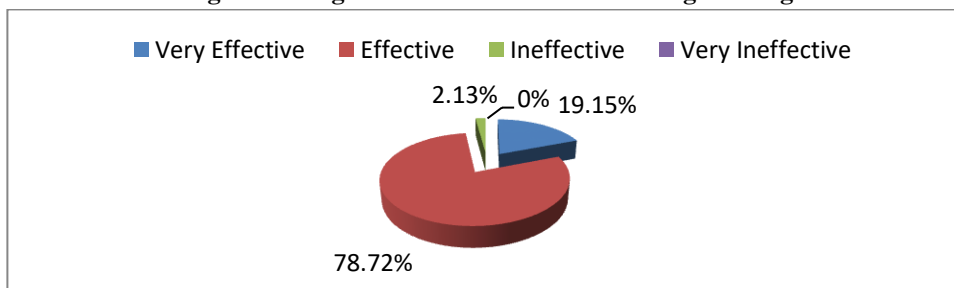


Figure 1 describes that students view the blog as effective media in learning to write. The teaching process delivered through a blog is viewed to give the effectivity in writing. Based on several categories of view in percentage, 78,73% from the students' view is that students feel comfortable in writing class so that the class is very effective; 19,15% from the students' view is that effective in writing class through the blog; 2,13% from students' view is ineffective. Based on these illustrations, learning to write through the blog is considered a good way and this supports the goal of class writing. Blog based on the students' view has the central position to make the writing class effective.

students' interest indicates how far the students are interested in writing class through the blog. 17,02% from the students' view dealing with a blog as media of teaching states that it is very effective; 74,47% means effective; 6,38% means ineffective, and 2,13% means very ineffective. From the four layers, the majority of students conclude effectively when the teacher uses a blog as the media of teaching writing. It means that the blog helps students in participating in the writing class handled by the lecturer. The blog is viewed effectively in delivering the material to students because they can participate actively in the classroom, and it is interesting to fo them as the way to make them interested in writing class.

**Figure 2. Students are Interested in Blog as Media of Teaching**

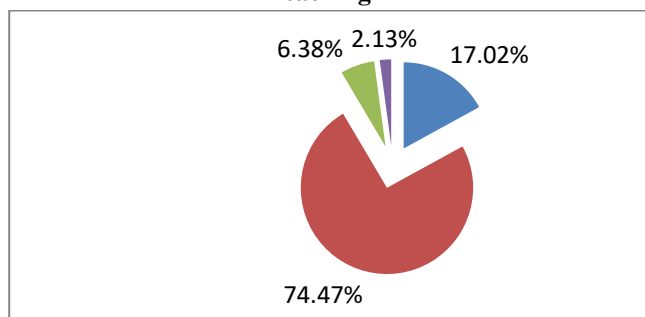


Figure 2 describes the level of students' interest in the blog as the media of teaching the lecturer applies in writing class. The level of

**Figure 3. Blog is Forum of Discussion between Teacher and Students**

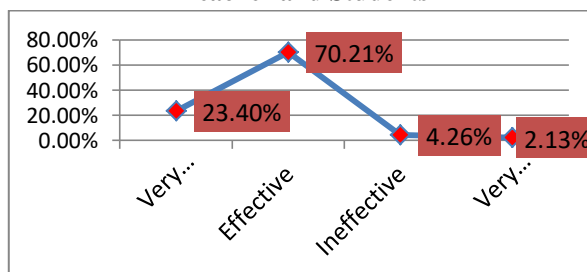


Figure 3 is the students' view dealing with whether blog as the forum of discussion between teacher and students is considered helpful in writing class. 23,40% from the



students' view means very effective; 70,21% is effective; 4,26% is ineffective; and 2,13% means very ineffective. The highest distribution position of students' view is effective indicating that blog helps and strengthens the teacher's and students' interaction in writing class so that the discussion of writing class is not limited of time and place, but anytime it happens. Students can share their comments with their peers at any time, and the teacher can give feedback at any time.

**Figure 4. A blog is Effective for Students to Submit the Assignment**

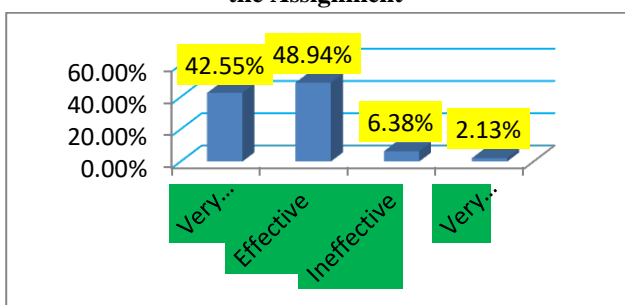


Figure 4 is the students' thought how they view blog for the interest of submitting the assignment. 42,55% means every effective; 48,94% means effective; 6,38% is ineffective; and 2,13% is very ineffective. It seems that students tend to choose blog effective as the media of submitting the assignment. Their choice describes their view that submitting an assignment through a blog can be done at any time. It is simple and efficient. Simplicity and efficiency are the indicators of effective that the blog helps students in submitting the assignments. Because of that, the peers and the teacher can monitor at any time. Simplicity and efficiency are viewed effectively for students in submitting the assignment through the blog.

**Figure 5. The Teacher Uses the Assignment in Blog for Teaching Material**

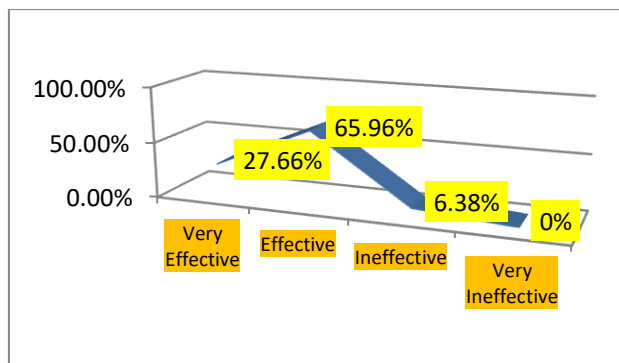


Figure 5 maps effectivity of the assignment used in the blog for teaching material and students vary in responding to this. 27,66% is very effective; 65,96% means effective; 6,38% is ineffective, and there are no students who give their view dealing with the very ineffective choice. Based on their variation of giving a view, majority of students view effective dealing with the assignment used in the blog for teaching material, and this is students' view from their experiences in writing class. In the students' view, their assignments uploaded in the blog enrich the teacher' material in teaching because their assignments are considered their reflection and knowledge in practice in writing.

**Figure 6. Every Students Comments the Articles and the Lecturer Discusses in the Class**

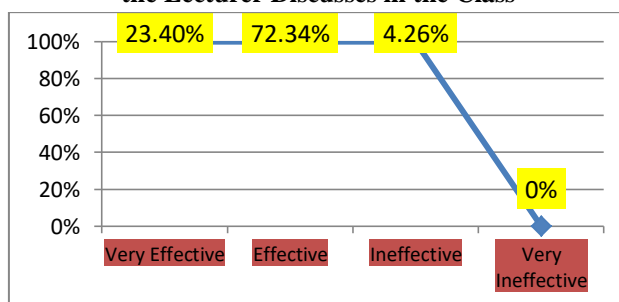


Figure 6 aims to find out the students' satisfaction whether a blog is helpful for the students in commenting their peers and for the teacher in teaching writing. 23,4% from the students' view states very effective; 72,3% means effective; 4,26% mean ineffective; and

no students view very ineffective. It means that blog is viewed as the media of teaching writing that is effective and helpful in assisting the students and the teacher in writing class. The blog presence is supportive towards the goal of teaching writing in which the students can share their comments and the teacher can give feedback to the students' writing assignment. Blog for them is the facility for sharing experiences in writing and their sharing enriches their knowledge for each peers and the teacher.

In a word, blog is interesting media of teaching writing to make the students interested to participate in the classroom. Blog guides students focus on what to study and they like to follow the teacher's instruction dealing with writing. It means that blog is helpful for the students to increase their interestedness and motivation in learning. Students' motivation and interestedness can be built through presenting the teaching media in line with the students' like in teaching media.

## 2. The Result of Students' Writing Performance

Here are the data of students' writing performance gotten from writing test and it is presented in terms of percentage as follows:

**Table 1 The Result of Students' Writing Achievement**

Students' scores	Criteria	Frequency	Percentage
80	Excellent	-	-
75-79	Very good	2	9%
70-74	Good	5	22%
65-69	Fair	14	65%
64-60	Poor	1	4%
Total		23 students	100%

Based on table 1, it can be concluded that majority of students (65%) have fair writing performance. It means that the average of students' writing performance is not good. Students' writing performance in average means

that they have tried to do the best in writing in maximal achievement. Their writing performance is obtained after they followed the steps and process in teaching writing through blog as the media of teaching.

## 3. The Result of Correlation between Students' Perspectives on the Use of Blog in Writing and Their Writing Achievement

In order to calculate the correlation value of two variables, the raw score of both variables are mapped out in forms of table. The computation of the data using Pearson Product Moment formula is presented below:

$$\begin{aligned}
 r &= \frac{N \sum XY - (\sum X)(\sum Y)}{\sqrt{[N \sum X^2 - (\sum X)^2][N \sum Y^2 - (\sum Y)^2]}} \\
 &= \frac{23 \times 30171,5 - (439)(1587,5)}{\sqrt{[23 \times 8503 - (439)^2][23 \times 109843,25 - (1587,5)^2]}} \\
 &= \frac{-2968}{\sqrt{[195569 - 192721][2526394,75 - 2520156,25]}} \\
 &= \frac{-2968}{\sqrt{[2848][6238,5]}} \\
 &= \frac{-2968}{\sqrt{17767248}} \\
 &= \frac{-2968}{4215,12} \\
 &= -0.70
 \end{aligned}$$

The result of computation of correlation coefficient (r) is -0.70. Meanwhile, the value of r in the table of significance with 21 as the degree of freedom (df= N-2) at 0.5 level of significance is 0.433 and at 0.1 level of significance is 0.549. It indicates that the value of correlation coefficient is lower than the value of r. It means that the correlation between two variables under this research is not significant.

## 4. Hypothesis Testing

The correlation coefficient (r) of this research is -0.070. Consequently, the value of correlation coefficient is lower than critical r (0.433 at 0.5 level of significance and 0.549 at 0.1 level of significance). Findings of the research show that the correlation between students' perspectives on the use of blog in learning

writing and their writing achievement are not significant. The relationship between those two variables does not correlate significantly because the independent variable (the students' perspectives on the use of blog in learning writing) increases, and another variable one/dependent (the students' writing achievement) decrease. It indicates that the independent variable under this research does not affect dependent variable to be higher, but lower in stated.

Based on the findings, the formulated alternative hypothesis (there is a positive correlation between the students' perspectives on the use of blog in learning writing and their writing achievement) is rejected. It cannot be proven in this research since the computed  $r$  is lower than the critical  $r$  in the table. On the other hand, the formulated null hypothesis (there is no correlation between students' perspectives on the use of blog in learning writing and their writing achievement) is accepted. The result of the coefficient correlation shows that there is no significant correlation between them.

## Discussions

Correlational research design is used to assess relationships and patterns of relationship among variables in a single group of subjects (Ary, et al, 2010). In detail explanation, the correlational study conducted aims at measuring the extent of the relationship between two or more variables, expressing the extent to which changes in one variable are accompanied with changes in the other variable. The correlation coefficient (the expression of the extent of relationship) involves no units and varies from -1 (indicating perfect negative correlation) to +1 (indicating perfect positive correlation). In case the coefficient of correlation is 0 (zero), it indicates no correlation between two sets of measurements.

If being positive, it is a perfect positive correlation. It is perfect because there are no

reversals or change of pairs of ranks and it is positive because both variables increase together. If there is high aspect on one variable, there is high on the other, and, if there is low on one, there is low on the other. The perfect positive correlation is denoted by a coefficient of +1.00. However, there is perfect negative correlation. It is perfect because there are no changes or reversals of pairs of ranks and it is negative because one variable increase so that the other one decreases. Perfect negative correlation is denoted by a coefficient of -1.00. In other words, any coefficient less than perfect means that there have been some reversals or changes in the relative ranking (Singh in Aulia, 2017).

Dealing with this research aiming to investigate and examine whether the students who have positive perspectives on the use of blogs in the writing activities performs better on their writing achievement, it is stated from findings that although they are interested in blog as the media of teaching writing in writing class indicated from their views shown in figures explaining their perspectives.

The positive perception the students hold dealing with blog use in writing class shown above 60% is in line with the students' interest towards digital media in which blog can be considered virtual learning media so that all students can publish their composition at any time. It means that blog supports the students' era dealing with e-learning as the development of learning media (Ghislandi, 2012). However, the students' perception in high and positive manner towards blog use does not prove their writing performance in which they get 65% categorized fair. Their writing performance has not proven their writing capacity so that this performance in writing is not in line with the students' perception themselves. The similar finding was found by stating Rifai (2010) that blog did not give a significant influence on improving students' writing competence. It means that the use of the blog does not change



the students' learning way in writing and this happens because students there is no enthusiasm and participation.

Their writing performance is not their reflection from their views of blog use in writing activities. Although the students are very interested in and cheerful with blog media as the way of learning to write, their interestedness based on students' view does not prove their seriousness in writing performance. Students' interestedness towards blog does not guarantee their effort to achieve good writing performance. For them, although blog is the interesting media but they have any problems in using blog for writing. Besides that, when blog is used for learning, it seems that they are not motivated and it is different from when blog is only for hobby or entertainment. It is also supported by other finding stating that the students cannot participate actively in blog because of the weakness in teamwork. Learning through blog should be started and strengthened through teamwork in which they should be active to share their writing assignment and comment.

There are several important traits had by the students when they expect to be digital learners, namely openness, agreeableness, neuroticism, extraversion and conscientiousness so that they can participate and collaboraten virtual learning (Jones & Holland, 2013). It seems that students are weak and lack of those and the blog presence does not support the goal of writing class through blog.

In line with Rifai (2010), Angeles et al., (2015) also state that the presence of blog in writing does not give a contribution in writing performance significantly. There is no significant correlation between the students' perception and average score. It means that although students use blog in wring class, their writing performance does not reflect the learning process in writing. Students with high score is not affected by blog role, but their personalities to learn diligently and their input

before entering the class. Input before entering the class is that students have prior knowledge supporting them in learning so that the blog presence is not helpful significantly to achieve writing performance. It means that there is no significant difference between students who do blogging and those who do not based on the communicative function, reflective function, technical function, entertainment function and time element on blogging. Because of this, it can be stated that blog contribution towards writing class for students' writing performance does not answer the students' need in achieving good writing performance. Therefore, students' perception of dealing with the blog is one case; students' writing performance is another case. Both of them are separated and cannot complete each other.

İnceçay and Genç (2014) state that there is not a significant effect of self-blogging on the foreign language learners' writing efficacy meaning that it is clear that students' awareness regarding the importance of this tool is raised, whether there is the correlation between the blog and writing performance, it is another case that is not embedded in this. Therefore, blog only functions to develop metalinguistic awareness so that students can see their linguistic mistakes and pay more attention to sentence construction. This, in turn, means better paragraphs or essays for students. Besides, use of self- blogging makes students improve their technological skills.

Based on several similar research results to strengthen and give academic reasons to this research whether there is a correlation between students' perspective on the use of blog in writing activities and writing performances or not, it is not proven and it means that there is no correlation between students' perspective on the use of blog in writing activities and writing performances. In a word, students' performance in writing does not reflect their learning process in blog although the teacher uses blog as the media of teaching writing. Blog is only for

building and strengthening students' awareness towards technology and students' writing performance is achieved by practising to write.

The high interestedness in blog use of teaching writing shown in figures does not assist students' performance in writing thoroughly. What they perform and when they participate in class with high motivation manner in class through blog does not end with maximal achievement in writing performance. The higher interestedness in blog to write the students have, the lower performance they achieve in writing performance.

## CONCLUSION

The way of thinking stating that blog use correlates to writing performance built in this research is not proven in which it says that the correlation coefficient (r) of this research is -0.070. The value of correlation coefficient is lower than critical r (0.433 at 0.5 level of significance and 0.549 at 0.1 level of significance). It means that the correlation between students' perspectives on the use of blog in learning writing and their writing achievement is not significant. Although students' view is supportive to writing class through blog, it does not answer the students' need to achieve good writing performance.

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