

ABSTRACT

Dea Anjelena Fitri, 2026.

“Students’ Writing of Formal Invitation Letters in the Eleventh Grade at Vocational School 1 of Bengkulu City in the 2026 Academic Year.” Undergraduate Thesis, English Education Study Program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, University of Muhammadiyah Bengkulu. Supervisor : Kiagus Baluqiah, M.Pd

This study aimed to assess the quality of formal invitation letter writing produced by eleventh-grade students at Vocational School 1 of Bengkulu City during the 2026 academic year. The study focused on six structural components of formal invitation letters : heading, salutation, body, closing, complimentary closing and signature. A descriptive qualitative research design was employed, involving 26 eleventh-grade students. The data were collected through students’ writing products and analyzed based on criteria for the six structural components. The results showed that the students’ performance in all six structural components of formal invitation letter was categorized as Good. The body and signature components demonstrated the highest performance, while the salutation component showed the lowest performance, although it was still categorized as Good. Overall, the students’ writing of formal invitation letters was categorized as Good based on the criteria established in this study.

Keywords: Students’ Writing, Formal Invitation Letters, Writing Performance, Letter Structure, Vocational School 1.

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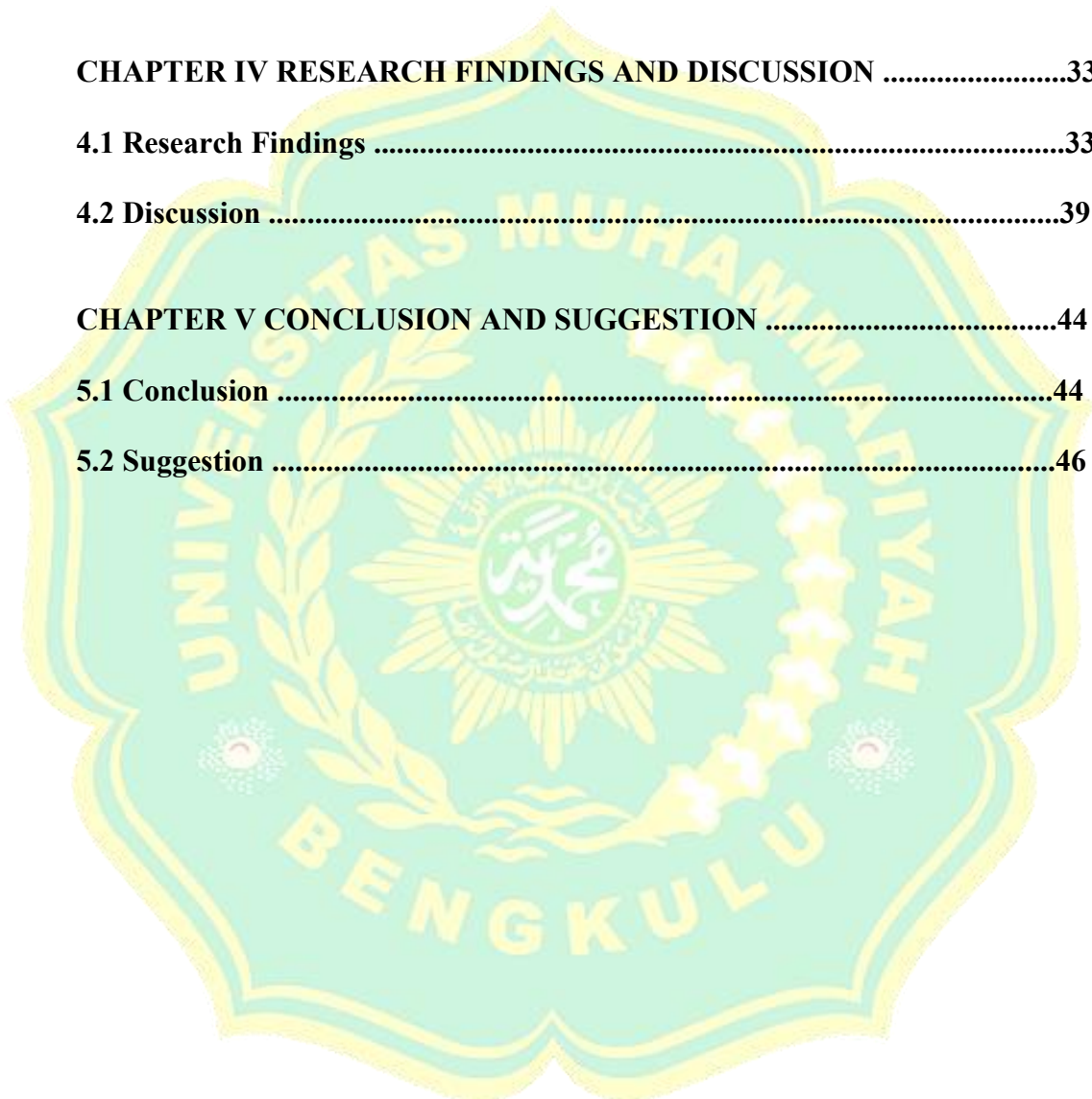
Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menilai kualitas penulisan surat undangan formal yang dihasilkan oleh siswa kelas XI di Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan Negeri 1 Kota Bengkulu pada tahun akademik 2026. Penelitian ini berfokus pada enam komponen struktural surat undangan formal, yaitu heading, salam pembuka, isi surat, penutup, salam penutup, dan tanda tangan. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain penelitian deskriptif kualitatif yang melibatkan 26 siswa kelas XI. Data dikumpulkan melalui produk tulisan siswa dan dianalisis berdasarkan kriteria dari enam komponen struktural tersebut. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kemampuan siswa dalam menulis keenam komponen struktural surat undangan formal secara keseluruhan berada dalam kategori Baik. Komponen isi surat dan tanda tangan menunjukkan kinerja tertinggi, sedangkan komponen salam pembuka menunjukkan kinerja terendah, meskipun masih berada dalam kategori Baik. Secara keseluruhan, penulisan surat undangan formal oleh siswa berada dalam kategori Baik berdasarkan kriteria yang ditetapkan dalam penelitian ini.

Keywords: Penulisan Siswa, Surat Undangan Formal, Kinerja Menulis, Struktur Surat, Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan Negeri 1.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Research

Writing is an essential skill in learning English as it allows students to convey thoughts, share information, and communicate messages through written words. In the study of English, learners are expected to not only comprehend written material but also create suitable written responses that are appropriate for various purposes and contexts. For students attending vocational schools, writing skills are especially important because the English language is useful both in academic settings and in future job-related situations. Therefore, students must work on improving their skill to create written texts that are clear, well-structured, and suitable for formal purposes.

One form of formal writing that is relevant to students' academic and professional needs is the **formal invitation letter**. A formal invitation letter is a written communication used to invite an individual or group to attend a particular formal event or activity. In a school environment, formal invitation letters may be used for meetings, seminars, competitions, workshops, organisational activities, and other official events. In the workplace, formal invitation letters may also be used to communicate invitations to meetings, training, seminars, and other official activities. Therefore, learning to write a formal invitation letter provides vocational school students with practical experience in using English for formal written communication.

A formal invitation letter is designed with a specific aim and structure that sets it apart from other kinds of writing. To create a proper formal invitation letter, students should be aware of the components that constitute the letter. In this study, the format of a formal invitation letter includes several parts: a heading, a greeting,

the body, a closing, a complimentary closing, and the sender's signature. The heading includes details about who sent the letter and when it was written.

The **salutation** contains the greeting addressed to the recipient. The **body** presents the purpose of the invitation and important information about the event, such as the event, date, time, place, and other relevant information. The **closing** provides a concluding statement before the final polite expression. The **complimentary closing** contains a formal expression used to end the letter politely, while the **signature** identifies the sender and may include the sender's name and position. These components are interconnected and contribute to the organisation and completeness of a formal invitation letter.

Students' writing skills can be assessed by looking at how well they include and organise the necessary structural elements in a formal written invitation letter. Each student may show a different level of performance when presenting the required components. By analysing the writing samples of students, we can gain insight into their ability to create a formal invitation letter that follows the appropriate structure as expected. A study of each part can offer a more thorough understanding of students' writing abilities, as it highlights their performance in the heading, greeting, body, closing, complimentary closing, and signature individually.

The focus of this research is therefore on **students' writing performance in producing formal invitation letters based on their structural components**. The research examines the students' written products to determine how well the required components are presented in their formal invitation letters. The analysis focuses on the structure of the letter and does not consider vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, or speaking ability. The analysis emphasises the structural elements, offering a clear explanation of students' capability to write a formal invitation letter and showing how well they include the necessary parts in their writing.

Several previous studies have examined students' writing of formal invitation letters. **Raihan (2022)** investigated students' ability to write formal invitation letters and reported students' performance across different components of the letter. The study demonstrated that students' levels of performance could be identified separately for each component of a formal invitation letter. **Melja et al. (2022)** also examined students' writing ability and reported variations in students' performance across aspects of formal writing. Furthermore, **Panjaitan (2024)** examined students' writing of formal invitation letters and provided information concerning students' performance in producing this type of formal text. These studies show that examining students' writing of formal invitation letters can provide meaningful information about their ability to produce formal written communication.

Although previous studies have provided information about students' writing of formal invitation letters, further research is still relevant because students' writing performance can be examined from a more specific structural perspective. Previous studies have discussed students' general writing ability and aspects related to their performance in writing formal invitation letters. The present research specifically focuses on **how good students' writing is based on the structural components of formal invitation letters**. The six elements analysed are the heading, greeting, body, closing, complimentary closing, and the signature. This analysis focuses the researcher on describing students' performance in a structured way based on each component, rather than considering the formal invitation letter as a single, complete text.

The research is conducted at the **eleventh grade of Vocational School 1 of Bengkulu City** because vocational school students are expected to develop English skills that can be applied in practical academic and professional contexts. At the eleventh-grade level, students are expected to apply their knowledge of English to various forms of written communication.

Formal invitation letters are a specific kind of written communication that can be used in connection with school events, organisational activities, and future job-related scenarios. Analysing the writing skills of eleventh-grade students can offer insights into their capability to use English writing knowledge when creating a formal written document.

The urgency of this research is related to the need for a clear description of students' writing performance in formal invitation letters. A formal invitation letter consists of several structural components, and each component contributes to the overall organisation of the text. By examining these components individually, the researcher can obtain a detailed description of how students construct formal invitation letters. Such information is useful because it provides a clearer understanding of students' writing performance than an overall observation of the letter alone.

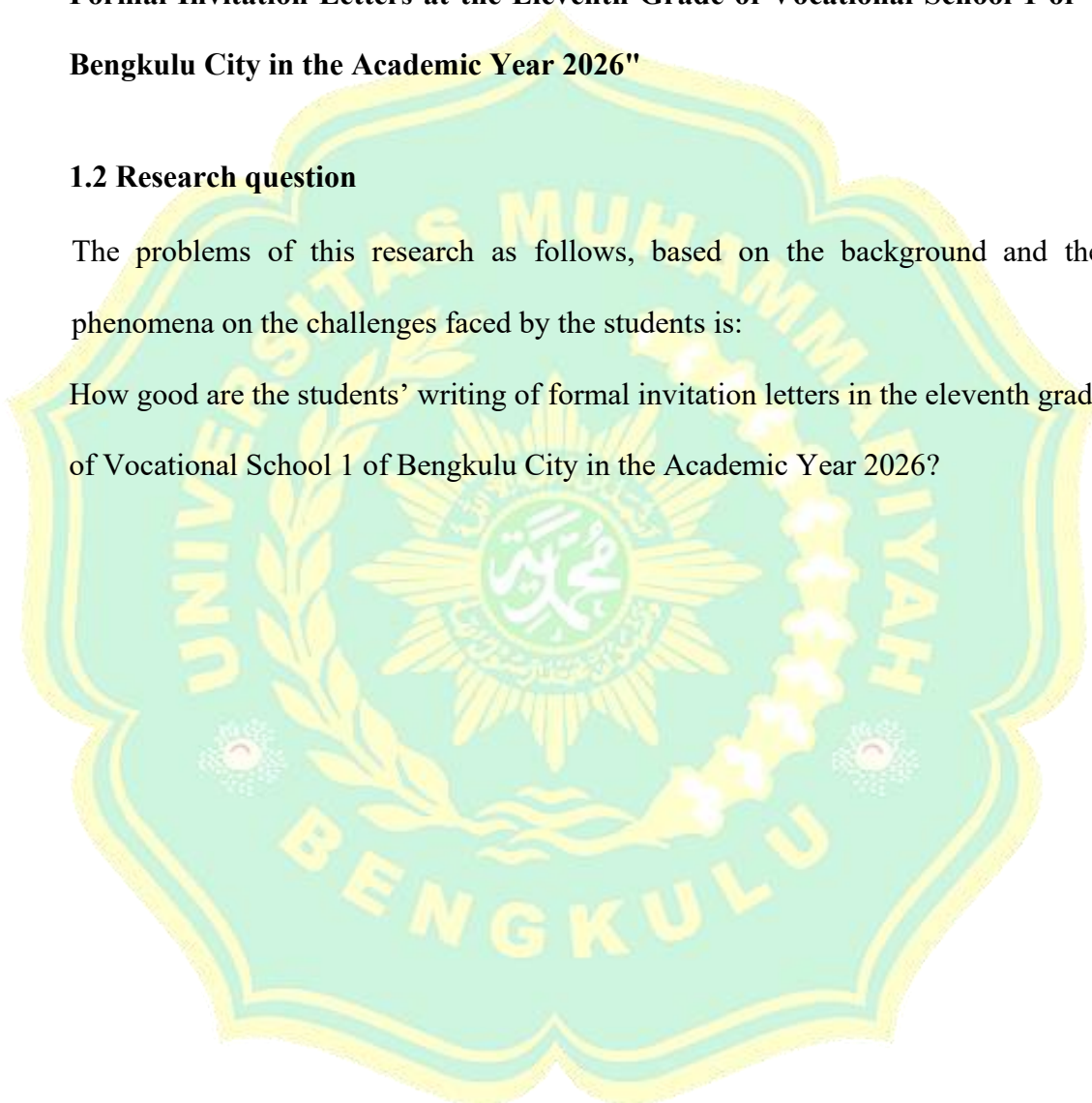
This study holds significance for students, educators, educational institutions, and those who will conduct research in the future. For students, the research offers a summary of their capability to create the necessary structure of a formal invitation letter. For English teachers, the results can offer insights into how students are performing in each part of the structure, and this information can be taken into account when creating writing tasks and planning lessons. The results can offer the school a general understanding of how well students are able to use English in a formal written setting. This study can serve as a foundation for future researchers who are interested in exploring students' writing abilities, formal communication skills, and the teaching of English writing within vocational education settings.

Based on the explanation above, examining students' writing of formal invitation letters is important to obtain a clear and systematic description of their writing performance. By analysing the **heading, salutation, body, closing, complimentary closing, and signature**, this research can describe how well eleventh-grade students construct the required structural components of a formal invitation letter. Therefore, this research is entitled **"Students' Writing of Formal Invitation Letters at the Eleventh Grade of Vocational School 1 of Bengkulu City in the Academic Year 2026"**

1.2 Research question

The problems of this research as follows, based on the background and the phenomena on the challenges faced by the students is:

How good are the students' writing of formal invitation letters in the eleventh grade of Vocational School 1 of Bengkulu City in the Academic Year 2026?



1.3 Research objective

Based on the research question, the objective of this research is:

To describe how good the eleventh-grade students MPLB 2 of Vocational School 1 of Bengkulu City can write formal invitation letters in the Academic Year 2026 based on the structural components of the letters.

1.4 Significance of the Research

This research is expected to provide both theoretical and practical contributions to English language teaching and learning, particularly in the area of writing formal invitation letters. The findings of this research are expected to provide information about students' writing performance in constructing formal invitation letters based on their structural components. The significance of this research is presented as follows:

1.4.1 Theoretical Significance

Theoretically, this study is anticipated to enhance the understanding of how students perform when writing formal invitation letters within the framework of vocational education. Writing a formal invitation letter requires students to convey information in written English while also arranging the content in a suitable structure. By examining students' writing through its structural elements, educators can gain a better insight into how students develop and organise a formal written text.

The findings of this research are expected to provide a description of students' ability to organise the six structural components of formal invitation letters, namely heading, salutation, body, closing, complimentary closing, and signature. The findings may show the extent to which students are able to include and organise the information

required in each component of a formal invitation letter. Thus, the research can provide additional information concerning students' formal writing performance, particularly in a vocational school context.

Furthermore, this research could help build a better understanding of how to teach and learn both functional and formal writing in English. The results could also offer valuable insights that help in understanding how students perform when creating a particular form of formal written communication. This research can also act as a guide for future studies that aim to explore how students write formal invitation letters or other forms of formal written communication, using different participants, contexts, or areas of analysis.

1.4.2 Practical Significance

Practically, this research is hoped to be beneficial for English teachers, students, and future researchers. The practical significance of this research is described as follows:

a. For English Teachers

This research is hoped to provide English teachers with information about the writing performance of eleventh-grade students in creating formal invitation letters. The findings provide an outline of students' performance in the six structural parts of a formal invitation letter, such as the heading, salutation, body, closing, complimentary closing, and signature.

The findings may help teachers identify the structural elements that require greater awareness in the teaching and learning process, especially the heading, salutation, and closing. Teachers can provide organised explanations of the function, position, and proper form of each structural element. Teachers may also use authentic models of formal

invitation letters from schools, organisations, or companies to help students understand how the elements are arranged in actual formal written communication.

Also, the findings may support teachers in providing guided writing activities and productive feedback. Through step-by-step practice, students can be given opportunities to practise writing and arranging each structural element of a formal invitation letter. Thus, this research may assist teachers in creating writing instruction that is more organised and relevant to students' basic writing performance.

b. For Students

This research is expected to enhance students' understanding of the significance of structure in writing formal invitation letters. By understanding the six structural elements, students can identify the information and expressions that should be included and how they should be arranged in a formal invitation letter.

The findings may enable students to practise writing formal invitation letters regularly, particularly by raising awareness of the heading, salutation, and closing. Students can also read varied examples of formal invitation letters to become more knowledgeable about standard forms, appropriate expressions, and the organisation of information in formal written communication.

In addition, this research may enable students to study and modify their writing before submitting it. By reviewing the fullness and organisation of each structural element, students can improve the quality of their formal invitation letters and create greater awareness of appropriate formal written communication.

c. For Future Researchers

This research is hoped to provide valuable information and help as a concern for future researchers who are interested in students' writing of formal invitation letters or other forms of formal written communication. The findings provide a description of

students' writing performance based on the six structural elements of a formal invitation letter.

Future researchers might carry out comparable studies involving a greater number of individuals or students from various schools and different stages of education. These studies could offer more comprehensive insights into how students perform when writing formal invitation letters in various educational settings. In addition, future studies could broaden the research by looking into other elements of writing that were not addressed in this study, including grammar, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling, mechanics, coherence, and the appropriateness of language use. They might also look into factors that affect how well students perform in writing or assess how effective certain teaching approaches, tools, or techniques are in helping students learn formal written communication. In this manner, the current study can act as a foundation for future research on students' English writing and formal written communication.

1.4.3 Limitation of The Problem

This study focuses on examining the writing abilities of eleventh-grade students from Vocational School 1 in Bengkulu City when they create formal invitation letters during the academic year 2026. The analysis centres on the structural elements of formal invitation letters, including the heading, salutation, body, closing, complimentary closing, and signature.

This study does not look into other aspects of writing, including grammar, vocabulary, spelling, punctuation, coherence, or the challenges students face when writing and the factors that affect these challenges. The data include only the formal invitation letters created by the students as part of the writing task assigned by the researcher.

1.5 Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misunderstanding and to clarify the scope and focus of this research, several important terms used in this study are operationally defined as follows:

1.5.1 Students' Writing

Students' writing refers to the written products produced by the eleventh-grade students of Vocational School 1 of Bengkulu City through the writing task conducted in this research. In this study, students' writing specifically refers to the formal invitation letters written by the students in English. The students' writing products are analysed to describe how well they are able to construct the required structural components of a formal invitation letter.

1.5.2 Formal Invitation Letters

Formal invitation letters refer to written texts used to formally invite an individual or a group of people to attend or participate in a particular event. A formal invitation letter generally presents information in an organised and polite manner and follows an appropriate formal letter structure.

In the research, formal invitation letters refer particularly to the letters written by the eleventh-grade students based on formal event situations provided in the writing task. The situations include school events, school competitions, educational seminars, parents' meetings, company events, journalism workshops, community programs, and students' council meetings. The students are expected to arrange the information about the event according to the required structural elements of a formal invitation letter.

1.5.3 Students' Writing Ability

Students' writing ability refers to the extent to which students are able to produce a formal invitation letter appropriately and completely based on the structural requirements of the text. In this research, students' writing ability does not refer to students' overall English writing proficiency. Instead, it specifically refers to their ability to construct the required structural components of a formal invitation letter.

The students' writing ability is described through the analysis of their writing products, particularly the extent to which the students include and organise the heading, salutation, body, closing, complimentary closing, and signature in their formal invitation letters.

1.5.4 Structural Components of Formal Invitation Letters

Structural components refer to the parts that organise and form a formal invitation letter. Each component has a particular function in presenting the information contained in the letter. In this research, the structural components consist of six parts: **heading, salutation, body, closing, complimentary closing, and signature.**

These six components are used as the main basis for analysing the students' formal invitation letters. The analysis is intended to determine the students' performance in including and organising the required components of the letter.

1. Heading

The heading is the introductory part at the start of a formal invitation letter that gives details about the sender or the organisation and the letter itself. In this study, the title contains the name of the school or organisation, its address, contact details, and the date. The heading is seen as a key part of the letter's structure because it offers details

that help recognise the institution or sender and provides background information about the letter's purpose. When evaluating students' writing, there is a focus on whether the necessary heading details are included in the correct section of the letter.

2. Salutation

Salutation is the official greeting used to begin a letter and address the person it is written to. It is usually positioned following the heading and prior to the main body of the letter. In this research, salutation refers to the formal greeting that students write to address the person who is meant to receive the formal invitation.

The examination of the salutation involves determining if students incorporate a suitable greeting within the formal invitation letter. The greeting is considered a distinct part of the structure, separate from the main content and the complimentary closing.

3. Body

The body of a formal invitation letter is the main section that includes all the important details about the invitation and the event. It is the main section of the letter where the sender explains the reason for the invitation and provides all the relevant information to the recipient.

In this study, the content covers details like the reason for the invitation, the name of the event, the date, the time, the location, and any other appropriate information. The body is evaluated based on how well students incorporate the necessary information to communicate the event in a clear and suitable manner.

4. Closing

Closing refers to the final part of the main message in a formal invitation letter, where the sender summarises the purpose and expresses hope for a positive response. It comes after the main content in the body and before the friendly closing.

In this research, closing refers to the statement that students use to conclude the main message of the invitation. The closing is different from the complimentary closing because the closing wraps up the main message or content of the invitation, while the complimentary closing is a respectful way to finish the letter formally.

5. Complimentary Closing

Complimentary closing is a polite phrase used to formally conclude a letter, typically placed before the sender's name or signature. It is usually positioned towards the end of the letter and shows respect and courtesy towards the person receiving it.

In this research, the complimentary closing is analysed as a separate structural component of the formal invitation letter. Examples of complimentary closings include **“Sincerely,” “Yours sincerely,”** and **“Best regards.”** The focus is on whether students include an appropriate complimentary closing in their formal invitation letters.

6. Signature

Signature refers to the part of a formal invitation letter that identifies the sender. In this research, signature refers specifically to the inclusion of the sender's name and job title or position when appropriate.

The research does not focus on the physical or handwritten version of a signature. The analysis examines whether students include the sender's name and position at the conclusion of the formal invitation letter. Therefore, including the sender's name along with their appropriate job title or position is regarded as part of the signature in this study.

