

THE INFLUENCE OF WRITING MOTIVATION ON WRITING ANXIETY

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(Received 24th November 2025; revised 29th February 2026; accepted 15th March 2026)

Abstract. Writing motivation and writing anxiety are known as two important affective factors that influence learners' performance in second language writing. This study aimed to explore learners' perceptions of their writing motivation and writing anxiety, examined the relationship between the two variables, and determined whether significant differences exist across disciplines. A quantitative survey design was employed, involving 116 participants from various disciplines at a public university in Malaysia. The research instrument consisted of three sections namely demographic information, writing motivation (self-efficacy and task value), and writing anxiety (cognitive, somatic, and avoidance behaviour), adapted from previous studies. The findings revealed that learners demonstrated high levels of writing motivation, specifically in task value, while experiencing moderate levels of writing anxiety, with cognitive anxiety being the most prominent. Correlation analysis indicated a weak but significant positive relationship between writing motivation and writing anxiety, while ANOVA results showed no significant differences across disciplines. Overall, the study suggests that strengthening learners' motivational beliefs may help manage writing-related anxiety. These findings offer valuable pedagogical implications for instructors in designing supportive writing instruction that fosters motivation while reducing anxiety.

Keywords: *writing motivation, writing anxiety, self-efficacy, task value, ESL learners*

Introduction

Learners' goals, persistence, and judgement of their progress in composing are generally known to be determined by their writing motivation. Motivation (including confidence, goals, and beliefs), according to some studies, has a close link with text quality as well as broader academic indicators (Camacho et al., 2021; Ling et al., 2021). While motivation is not a single factor for weak writing (as other factors like classroom environment can also be the determining factors), it greatly impacts learners' writing as it can foster positive habits apart from improving writing engagement. However, writing anxiety such as cognitive worry, somatic symptoms, and avoidance can dampen learners' writing fluency and confidence. In recent years, research has found the link between higher anxiety and lower text quality while highlighting self-efficacy as a strategy to reduce the effect (Busse et al., 2023; Li, 2022). Other examples of the anxiety that many learners experience include fear of evaluation, limited topic knowledge, and heavy cognitive load (Wang et al., 2024; Widyaningsih et al., 2021). Despite the gravity of these obstacles, learners' anxiety can be overcome through pedagogical approaches that support their ability to write. This includes making obscure tasks clear and providing constant feedback. Put together, while writing motivation

fosters persistence and improves performance, writing anxiety can stall learners' progress. For this reason, it is a must then to ensure that teaching instructions that not only promote autonomy and self-efficacy but also reduce frequently reported threats. This two-pronged approach ensures that learners' motivation is supported while keeping their anxiety at bay- so learners write more often and more effectively.

Generally, student learning is persistently challenged by writing anxiety which often limits learners' fluency, clarity and task completion. In the context of composing, this assertion is sustained by Busse et al. (2023) who reported that anxiety negatively impacts text quality and confidence. Widyaningsih et al. (2021), for one, showed how anxiety intensifies stress among learners. As a result of these, learners may not be able to perform to their best ability. Today, this issue has grown into a greater concern as generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools have rapidly made it into every aspect of our lives, including teaching instructions. The swift adoption of AI along with uneven regulation and data-privacy risks has become a growing barrier to assessments and teaching practices impacting learners around the world (Holmes and Miao, 2023). Recently, learners' cognitive load has been reported to be further elevated resulting in more profound writing performance and weaker performance. According to Wang et al. (2024), this was likely due to the fact that learners now have to juggle tool use while meeting task demands. Therefore, in settings where work authorship and originality is scrutinised, learners are now becoming a lot more anxious. For this reason, further examination of writing motivation is highly essential. This is because motivation components have been shown to be positively associated with text quality and engagement (Busse et al., 2023; Camacho et al., 2021): this then presents a possible strategy to address the growing anxiety faced by learners. Writing motivation, as asserted by Myhill et al. (2023), can be fostered through teaching methods that promote learners' autonomy and self-efficacy. Considering the long-standing issue of writing anxiety, further amplified by AI complexities, calls for a deeper dive into understanding the ways how motivation shapes learners' writing outcomes. This includes understanding how motivation interacts with different types of anxiety (namely cognitive, somatic, and avoidance behaviour anxiety) apart from how motivation varies across different disciplines. These are the gaps that the study intends to address.

This study is done to explore the influence of writing motivation on writing anxiety. Specifically, this study is done to answer the following questions: (1) How do learners perceive their writing motivation? (2) How do learners perceive their cognitive anxiety in writing? (3) How do learners perceive somatic anxiety in writing? (4) How do learners perceive their avoidance behaviour anxiety in writing? (5) Is there a relationship between writing motivation and writing anxiety? (H1- There is no relationship between writing motivation and writing anxiety) (6) Is there a significant difference for writing motivation and writing anxiety across disciplines? (H2-There is no significant difference for writing motivation and writing anxiety across disciplines)

Literature review

Self-efficacy theory

This study is grounded in Bandura (1977) Self-Efficacy Theory, which provides a critical lens for understanding the construct of writing motivation. Central to this theory is the premise that an individual's belief in their capability to organise and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments that their self-efficacy is a

foundational driver of motivation. In the context of academic writing, writing motivation is intrinsically linked to a learner's writing self-efficacy: the confidence they hold in their ability to perform specific writing tasks successfully. This framework is directly applicable, as it posits that the level and strength of this self-efficacy will significantly influence a learner's choice to engage in writing, the effort they will expend, and their persistence in the face of difficulties or anxiety (Zimmerman and Bandura, 1994). Self-efficacy is not an innate trait but is built through four primary sources, each directly relevant to the writing classroom. First, mastery experiences, reflected through prior writing success, represent the most influential source. Successfully completing writing assignments strengthens a student's belief in their writing abilities, thereby enhancing their motivation to approach future tasks. This is supported by findings in the Malaysian context, where Raoofi (2014) found that mastery experiences were the most powerful predictor of writing self-efficacy among Malaysian undergraduates, highlighting how direct, successful performance in writing tasks forms the base of students' confidence in their academic abilities. Similarly, a research on Indonesian EFL students further substantiates this link. Astuti (2025), conducted a study on senior high school students, confirmed a significant positive correlation between writing self-efficacy and writing performance, directly illustrating how confidence built through successful mastery experiences translates into measurable academic outcomes.

Second, vicarious experiences gained through observing peers or mentors model successful writing strategies allow learners to build efficacy beliefs. This process is particularly effective when students identify with the model. Research in Thai university contexts has shown that video-mediated modelling of writing processes significantly enhanced students' self-efficacy and reduced their anxiety, as it provided a clear, relatable roadmap for success (Truong and Wang, 2019). In the Malaysian context, a systematic review underscores the critical importance of such supportive strategies for low-proficiency writers, noting that collaborative writing environments, which often incorporate peer modelling and joint task completion, are essential for mitigating writing anxiety and fostering self-efficacy within this specific learner demographic (Shukri and Salam, 2025). Third, social persuasion in the form of constructive feedback and verbal encouragement from instructors and peers can convince students of their writing capabilities. The nature of this feedback is crucial and formative, as process-oriented feedback is more effective than mere praise or criticism. The importance of such formative feedback for efficacy-building is further underlined by findings within the Malaysian secondary school context based on a study done on teachers' beliefs regarding written corrective feedback (WCF). Results revealed that educators strongly value feedback practices that guide improvement and build student confidence, indicating a pedagogical awareness of feedback's crucial role as a form of positive social persuasion that directly shapes students' self-beliefs (Adzhar et al., 2025).

Finally, managing physiological and affective states, such as stress and anxiety, is essential. Learners interpret their arousal during writing; anxiety perceived as debilitating undermines self-efficacy, while a sense of controlled challenge can enhance it. The bidirectional relationship between anxiety and self-efficacy is well-established. For instance, research on Arab learners in special education contexts directly supports this, identifying writing anxiety as a significant negative predictor of writing self-efficacy, thereby demonstrating that heightened affective states can actively erode a learner's fundamental belief in their writing capabilities (Alluhaybi, 2017). In the Malaysian context, localised research in secondary schools confirms this dynamic, with

findings indicating that students who report high levels of writing anxiety concurrently exhibit more negative attitudes and reduced confidence towards writing tasks, illustrating the concrete impact of unmanaged affective states on self-efficacy in the classroom. By applying this framework, the relationship between writing motivation and writing anxiety becomes clear. Strong writing self-efficacy, cultivated through these four interactive sources, fosters adaptive motivational patterns that can buffer against the cognitive, somatic, and behavioural symptoms of writing anxiety. Conversely, weak self-efficacy can diminish motivation and amplify anxious responses, creating a cycle of avoidance. Furthermore, this theoretical perspective allows for the exploration of potential differences across academic disciplines, as the nature of mastery experiences, available models, forms of social persuasion, and prevalent stress triggers within a disciplinary community can vary systematically, leading to differing profiles of motivation and anxiety among learners (Hyland, 2019).

Writing anxiety

Writing anxiety is frequently addressed as an emotional element that affects students' readiness to write and their effectiveness in writing assignments, especially in second or foreign language settings. In research on second language writing, Cheng (2004) offers one of the most recognized frameworks for comprehending writing anxiety. Writing anxiety is viewed as a complex factor and initiated the development of the Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) to assess students' anxiety during second language writing tasks. The SLWAI includes three aspects namely; cognitive anxiety, somatic anxiety, and avoidance behavior. Cognitive anxiety relates to students' concerns and fears regarding unfavorable assessments during writing, somatic anxiety includes physical responses such as tension and nervousness, and avoidance behavior indicates a tendency to evade writing assignments (Cheng, 2004). Employing Cheng's framework, many studies have investigated the extent and characteristics of writing anxiety in ESL and EFL students. Syarifudin (2020), in research with university students, discovered that students typically experienced moderate to high levels of writing anxiety, with cognitive anxiety being the most notable aspect. The research found that anxiety primarily came from fear of grammatical mistakes, lack of vocabulary, and worries about teacher assessment. These results align with Cheng (2004) perspective that writing anxiety in educational settings is closely linked to students' views on language accuracy and evaluation. The findings indicate that writing anxiety is frequently influenced by students' past writing experiences and their self-assurance in utilizing the target language.

Recent studies have concentrated on the effects of writing anxiety on writing performance. Guo et al. (2021) examined second language writing anxiety and found a consistent relation between writing anxiety and writing success. Students with higher anxiety levels tended to create poorer written works and showed challenges in structuring thoughts and sustaining their writing flow. The assessment also highlighted that anxiety may affect cognitive functions related to writing, including planning and revising, which could help on writing performance. In general, the research suggests that writing anxiety is a major concern in second language writing and can influence both students' emotional reactions and their writing results. Cheng (2004) model is crucial for comprehending writing anxiety, and ongoing research continues to show its prevalence and its connection to writing performance.

Past studies

A substantial body of earlier research has consistently demonstrated a close relationship between writing motivation and writing anxiety. In general, learners who exhibit higher levels of motivation tend to experience lower anxiety when writing, which in turn contributes to stronger writing performance. The following discussion elaborates on the existing scholarship, revealing findings and gaps for further research. The study by Sabti et al. (2019) was conducted to investigate the interrelationship among writing anxiety, writing motivation, and writing self-efficacy, and how this affect writing performance. This research adopts a correlational design to examine the abovementioned relationships and focuses on Iraqi tertiary-level EFL learners. The respondents comprised 100 undergraduate students majoring in English from different colleges at Baghdad University. Data were collected using four instruments: the Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI), the Writer Self-Perception Scale (WSPS), the Achievement Goal Questionnaire (AGQ) and a descriptive writing task. The study found three main patterns in the relationships among writing anxiety, self-efficacy, and writing achievement motivation, and then linked these patterns to learners' actual behaviour and performance. First, anxiety was significantly and negatively related to writing self-efficacy. Students who felt more anxious about their writing tended to have lower confidence in their writing abilities, which is consistent with many early studies. Second, writing anxiety was also negatively related to writing achievement motivation, meaning that low motivation to achieve in writing was associated with higher anxiety and weaker performance. In contrast, a strong positive relationship emerges between self-efficacy and achievement motivation, suggesting that learners who believe in their writing abilities are more motivated to engage with and persist in writing tasks. Finally, the findings further indicated that highly anxious Iraqi EFL undergraduates often feared making mistakes and negative evaluation from teachers and peers, accompanied by observable physiological responses. Despite generally low levels of self-efficacy and motivation among the students, both constructs remain significant predictors of writing performance. Collectively, these findings emphasise the pedagogical importance of fostering learners' self-belief and motivation through supportive feedback and engaging instruction, as such affective conditions are crucial for reducing anxiety and enhancing writing achievement (Sabti et al., 2019).

Taddese et al. (2026) investigate writing anxiety and writing performance with particular emphasis on the impact of peer feedback as a pedagogical intervention in EFL writing classrooms. This research adopts a mixed-methods quasi-experimental design and focuses on third-year undergraduate EFL students at Wolkite University, Ethiopia. The respondents consisted of 78 students, divided equally into an experimental group (n=39), which received peer feedback, and a control group (n=39), which received teacher feedback only. Data were collected using adapted IELTS writing tasks, a validated Second Language Writing Anxiety Questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The study found that structured peer feedback had clear positive effects on both writing performance and writing anxiety among EFL undergraduates. Students who participated in peer feedback significantly improved their writing scores and a marked reduction in writing anxiety, while the control group showed no statistically significant change. Qualitative data further indicate that peer feedback fostered confidence, reduced fear of negative evaluation, and promoted collaborative learning. This study implies that structured peer feedback can function as both a cognitive scaffold and an affective buffer, supporting learners' academic development while

alleviating emotional barriers to writing. It is also suggested that deeper insights into long-term peer feedback could be explored through variables such as language proficiency, individual distinctiveness, and the integration of digital platforms (Taddese et al., 2026). Taken these together, these studies foreground the inseparable interplay between affective and cognitive dimensions of writing, particularly writing anxiety, motivation, self-efficacy, and performance. Sabti et al. (2019) illuminate how anxiety quietly erodes learners' confidence and motivation, even as self-efficacy and achievement motivate emerge as powerful predictors of writing success. Taddese et al. (2026), in turn, demonstrate that pedagogical intervention, specifically peer feedback, can meaningfully disrupt this cycle, reducing anxiety while simultaneously enhancing performance through social support and collaborative engagement. In conclusion, these findings suggest that writing anxiety is neither fixed nor inevitable, rather, it is shaped by learners' beliefs about themselves and by the instructional and structured environments in which they write.

Conceptual framework of the study

This study explores the influence of writing motivation on different types of writing anxiety. Writers' fear of writing can be considered as a cycle. According to Rahmat (2021), writers' beliefs about the writing task has a cyclical effect on the writing outcome. Nevertheless, it is believed that having writing motivation helps writers focus on the writing task and its outcome. *Figure 1* presents the conceptual framework of the study. According to Zhang et al. (2014), writers' motivation is derived from their (i) self-efficacy and (ii) task value. Writing motivation gives writers the push to complete the writing task no matter what the difficulties are. However, according to Cheng (2004), often writers are faced with writing anxiety and having these writing anxieties may affect writers' drive to complete or even begin with the writing task. According to Cheng (2004), there are three types of writing anxiety and they are (i) cognitive anxiety, (ii) somatic anxiety and (iii) avoidance behaviour. Additionally, this study also explores if there is a relationship between writing motivation and different types of writing anxiety.

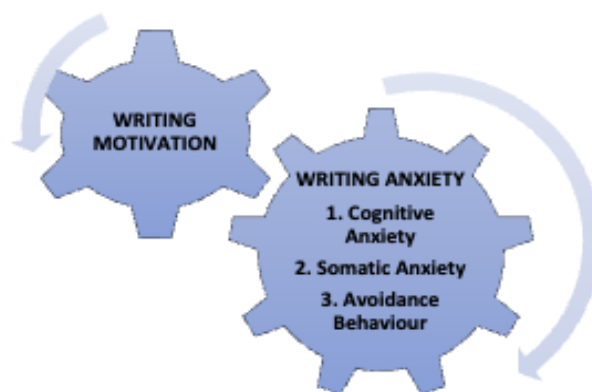


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the study the influence of writing motivation on types of writin anxiety.

Materials and Methods

This quantitative study is done to explore the influence of writing motivation on writing anxiety. A convenient sample of 116 participants responded to the survey. The instrument used is a 5 Likert-scale survey and is rooted from Zhang et al. (2014) and Cheng (2004) to reveal the variables in table. *Table 1* shows the categories used for the Likert scale; 1 is for Strongly Disagree, 2 is for Disagree, 3 is for Undecided, 4 is for Agree and 5 is for Strongly Agree. *Table 2* shows the distribution of items in the instrument. Section B consists of a total of 9 items measuring writing motivation, which are divided into two constructs, namely self-efficacy (5 items) and task value scale (4 items) which were adapted from Zhang et al. (2014). This section demonstrates high internal consistency with a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.895. Section C comprises 22 items measuring writing anxiety which were adapted from Cheng (2004). This section includes three constructs, namely cognitive anxiety (8 items), somatic anxiety (7 items), and avoidance behaviour (7 items), and shows a strong reliability coefficient of 0.872. Overall, the instrument contains 31 items, and the total reliability of the questionnaire is high, with a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.882, indicating that the instrument is reliable for measuring writing motivation and writing anxiety. In order to determine the internal reliability of the instrument, reliability analysis is one. *Table 3* shows the distribution and interpretation of Cronbach Alpha range. According to Ahmad et al. (2024), Cronbach Alpha scores between 0.7 to 0.9 is considered acceptable to excellent. *Table 2* also shows the reliability of the survey. The analysis shows a Cronbach alpha of .895 for Writing Motivation and .872 for Writing Anxiety. The overall Cronbach alpha for all 31 items is .882; thus, revealing a good reliability of the instrument chosen/used. Further analysis using SPSS is done to present findings to answer the research questions for this study.

Table 1. Likert scale use.

Category	Description
1	Strongly Disagree
2	Disagree
3	Uncertain
4	Agree
5	Strongly Agree

Table 2. Distribution of items in the survey.

Category	Variable	Constructs	Items	Total items	Cronbach Alpha
B	Writing Motivation (Zhang et al., 2014)	Self-Efficacy	5	9	.895
		Task value scale	4		
C	Writing Anxiety (Cheng, 2004)	Cognitive	8	22	.872
		Somatic	7		
		Avoidance Behaviour	7		
Total				31	.882

Table 3. Reliability levels, Cronbach's Alpha ranges and their interpretations.

Reliability Level	Cronbach's Alpha range	Interpretation
Excellent	0.9 and above	Indicates very high internal consistency
Good	0.80-0.89	Reflects strong internal consistency
Acceptable	0.70-0.79	Indicates acceptable internal consistency
Questionable	0.60-0.69	Reflects questionable internal consistency
Poor	Below 0.6	Indicates poor internal consistency

Results and Discussion

Demographic analysis

According to Ziegenfuss et al. (2021), researchers report demographic data in percentages to establish sample representatives, and allow for generalizability to a larger population. The reporting also provides an overview of participants' characteristics. Percentages offer a clear and understandable picture of the sample makeup. *Table 4* presents the demographic profile of the participants who participated in the survey. In terms of gender distribution, female respondents constituted 80 per cent of the participants whereas the male only 20 per cent. As for the academic discipline, the participants came from diverse fields or backgrounds, with Hotel Management making up the largest proportion at 32 per cent followed by Health Sciences and Science and Technology, each with 25 per cent. Meanwhile, Humanities and Social Sciences and Business Management respectively accounted for 15 per cent and 3 per cent.

Table 4. Percentage for demographic profile.

Demographic profile	Categories	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	20%
	Female	80%
Discipline	Science & Technology	25%
	Humanities & Social Sciences	15%
	Business Management	3%
	Health Sciences	25%
	Hotel Management	32%

Findings for writing motivation

This section presents data to answer research question 1-How do learners perceive their writing motivation? In the context of this study, this is measured by (i) self-efficacy, and (ii) task value. Analysis of the data in *Table 5* reveals students' views on their capability to succeed in their writing course. The mean scores, ranging from 3.83 to 4.13, are consistently positive. This suggests a good level of general self-confidence among the students. However, a more detailed examination shows that this confidence is not absolute. Students express the strongest agreement with statements that include specific conditions for success. For instance, the highest score (mean = 4.13) is linked to the idea of having sufficient time to complete the work well. Similarly, high scores are associated with the belief that persistence of not giving up leads to success. This indicates that the students' self-efficacy is strongly connected to external factors like time and internal factors like determination. In other words, their confidence is conditional, it increases when they feel they have the necessary resources and personal commitment to manage the challenges of the course. The results presented in *Table 5*, which measures students' perceptions of the task value of their writing course, indicate a strong overall recognition of the subject's worth. The consistently high mean scores across all four items, ranging from 4.03 to 4.53 suggest that students firmly believe in the curriculum's importance and utility. Specifically, the most substantial agreement is found for the statements "I think learning WRITING is important" (M=4.53) and "What I learn in WRITING is useful" (M=4.38), demonstrating a significant endorsement of the discipline's fundamental and practical value. A more detailed look, however, reveals a subtle variation within this positive outlook. While both importance and utility are

highly valued, students report a moderately lower personal interest in the subject (M=4.10) and its relative usefulness compared to other academic fields (M=4.03). This refined pattern suggests that, although students clearly attribute a strong instrumental value to writing, their motivation may be driven more by an understanding of its necessity and application than by an inherent enthusiasm for the subject itself. The relatively uniform standard deviations (0.65 to 0.77) further confirm that these perceptions are held with a consistent degree of consensus across the group.

Table 5. Mean and standard deviation of descriptive analysis.

Item	Mean	Std. Dev.
Self-efficacy		
SEQ1 I am sure I can learn the skills taught in WRITING class well.	3.83	0.63
SEQ2 I can do the hardest work in my WRITING class if I try.	3.90	0.73
SEQ3 I can do almost all the work in WRITING class if I do not give up.	4.05	0.68
SEQ4 If I have enough time, I can do a good job in all my WRITING work.	4.13	0.69
SEQ5 Even if the work in WRITING is hard, I can learn it	4.05	0.67
Task value scale		
TVQ1 I think learning WRITING is important.	4.53	0.69
TVQ2 I find WRITING interesting.	4.10	0.73
TVQ3 What I learn in WRITING is useful.	4.38	0.65
TVQ4 Compared to other subjects, WRITING is useful.	4.03	0.77
Cognitive anxiety		
CAQ1 While writing in English, I'm not nervous at all.	3.47	0.92
CAQ2 While writing English compositions, I feel worried and uneasy if I know they will be evaluated.	3.83	0.84
CAQ3 I don't worry that my English compositions are a lot worse than others'.	3.08	1.09
CAQ4 If my English composition is to be evaluated, I would worry about getting a very poor grade.	4.12	0.92
CAQ5 I'm afraid that other students would deride my English composition if they read it.	3.75	1.07
CAQ6 I don't worry at all about what other people would think of my English compositions.	3.09	1.02
CAQ7 I'm afraid of my English composition being chosen as a sample to be discussed in class.	3.62	0.90
CAQ8 I'm not afraid at all that my English compositions would be rated as very poor.	2.76	1.07
Somatic analysis		
SAQ1 I feel my heart pounding when I write English compositions under time constraint.	3.87	0.96
SAQ2 My mind often goes blank when I start to work on an English composition.	3.48	0.95
SAQ3 I tremble or perspire when I write English compositions under time pressure.	3.14	1.49
SAQ4 My thoughts become jumbled when I write English compositions under time constraint.	3.72	0.95
SAQ5 I often feel panic when I write English compositions under time constraint.	3.63	0.98
SAQ6 I freeze up when unexpectedly asked to write English compositions.	3.35	0.98
SAQ7 I usually feel my whole-body rigid and tense when I write English compositions.	2.99	1.04
Avoidance behaviour		
ABQ1 I often choose to write down my thoughts in English.	3.63	0.88
ABQ2 I usually do my best to avoid writing English compositions.	3.03	1.00
ABQ3 I do my best to avoid situations in which I have to write in English.	2.97	1.06
ABQ4 Unless I have no choice, I would not use English to write composition.	3.16	1.07
ABQ5 I would do my best to excuse myself if asked to write English compositions.	2.78	1.16
ABQ6 I usually seek every possible chance to write English compositions outside of class.	3.50	0.83
ABQ7 Whenever possible, I would use English to write compositions.	3.78	0.88

Findings for cognitive anxiety

This section presents data to answer research question 2-How do learners perceive their cognitive anxiety in writing? Table 5 presents the mean scores (M) and standard deviations (SD) for eight components measuring learners's cognitive anxiety in writing. The findings reveal that learners experience a moderate to moderately high level of cognitive anxiety when engaging in English writing tasks. Remarkably, the highest mean score was recorded for CAQ4, at 4.12 with a standard deviation of 0.92, indicating that concern over receiving a poor grade remains the most salient source of anxiety among learners. This suggests that their apprehension is closely intertwined with evaluation and academic consequences, rather than with the process or the act of writing itself. Similarly, CAQ2 with a mean score of 3.83 and standard deviation of 0.84 and CAQ5 with a mean score of 3.75 and standard deviation of 1.07 further reinforce the notion that anxiety intensifies when writing is subjected to judgment either through

formal assessment or peer judgment and potential ridicule. In contrast, items that reflect self-comparative and social anxiety, such as CAQ3 (M=3.08, SD= 1.09) and CAQ6 (M=3.09, SD= 1.02), yielded comparatively lower mean scores. This suggests that learners are less troubled by comparisons with peers than by authoritative evaluation. Interestingly, although learners express worry about grades and lecturer judgment, they report relatively low fear regarding extreme failure. This is evident in CAQ8 with a mean score of 2.76 and standard deviation of 1.07, where respondents largely appear to possess confidence in accepting that their English compositions meet at least an acceptable standard, even when subjected to formal assessment. Moreover, CAQ7 with a mean score of 3.62 and standard deviation of 0.90, reveals a notable level of anxiety associated with public exposure. When their compositions are selected for classroom discussion, it exposes their visibility and vulnerability in shared learning spaces, opening rooms for peer judgement and scrutiny. Taken together, these findings suggest that learners' cognitive anxiety in writing is predominantly evaluation-driven, rooted in concerns about grades, lecturers' judgment, and public exposure, rather than in a fundamental lack of confidence in their writing ability. The pattern of responses reflects an anxiety that is cognitive in nature, unfolding the learners' imagined outcomes, judgments and possible academic repercussions.

Findings for somatic anxiety

This section presents data to answer research question 3-How do learners perceive somatic anxiety in writing? As presented in *Table 5*, the seven components representing somatic anxiety revealed that learners experience noticeable symptoms during English composition tasks. This is especially true when learners are put under time constraints. Among the items tested, the statement "I feel my heart pounding when I write English compositions under time constraint" recorded the highest mean score (M = 3.87, SD = 0.96). Similar results were observed for statements "My thoughts become jumbled when I write English compositions under time constraint" (M = 3.72, SD = 0.95) and "I often feel panic when I write English compositions under time constraint" (M = 3.63, SD = 0.98). Items such as "My mind often goes blank when I start to work on an English composition" (M = 3.48, SD = 0.95) and "I freeze up when unexpectedly asked to write English compositions" (M = 3.35, SD = 0.98), on the other hand, recorded moderate levels of somatic anxiety. "I usually feel my whole-body rigid and tense when I write English compositions" (M = 2.99, SD = 1.04) recorded the lowest mean. Overall, these findings demonstrate that somatic anxiety is perceived as a significant challenge by learners. It is a lot more pronounced under time-constrained conditions.

Findings for avoidance behaviour

This section presents data to answer research question 4-How do learners perceive their avoidance behaviour anxiety in writing? Analysis of *Table 5* provides insight into students' behavioural tendencies regarding English writing, revealing a pattern of moderate engagement coupled with a clear preference for avoidance in certain contexts. The overall profile is mixed. On one hand, positive items such as choosing to write down thoughts (M=3.63) and seeking opportunities to write outside class (M=3.50) show a willingness to engage. However, the data for avoidance-specific items presents a different point of view. Items describing active avoidance such as trying to excuse oneself from writing tasks (M=2.78) or avoiding situations requiring English writing

(M=2.97) received the lowest mean scores, indicating a general, though not absolute, rejection of these extreme avoidance behaviours. This suggests that while students are not enthusiastically proactive in all writing scenarios, they also do not exhibit strong, consistent avoidance. The pattern points towards a pragmatic or selectively engaged approach to English writing, where participation is more likely in comfortable, self-directed contexts than in formal, imposed, or high-stakes situations.

Findings for relationship between writing motivation and writing anxiety

This section presents data to answer research question 5-Is there a relationship between writing motivation and writing anxiety? *Table 6* shows there is an association between writing motivation and writing anxiety. Correlation analysis shows that there is a weak significant association between writing motivation and writing anxiety ($r=.259^{**}$) and ($p=.000$). According to He (2024), coefficient is significant at the 0.05 level and positive correlation is measured on a 0.1 to 1.0 scale. Weak positive correlation would be in the range of 0.1 to 0.3, moderate positive correlation from 0.3 to 0.5, and strong positive correlation from 0.5 to 1.0. This means that there is also a weak positive relationship between writing motivation and writing anxiety. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected.

Table 6. Correlation between social support and expectancy components.

Category		Writing motivation	Writing anxiety
Writing motivation	Pearson Correlation	1	.259**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.005
	N	116	116
Writing anxiety	Pearson Correlation	.259**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	
	N	116	116

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

Significant difference for writing motivation and writing anxiety across disciplines

This section presents data to answer research question 6-Is there a significant difference for writing motivation and writing anxiety across disciplines? (H4-There is no significant difference for writing motivation and writing anxiety across disciplines). With reference to *Table 7*, a one-way ANOVA was conducted to examine the effects of writing motivation and writing anxiety across disciplines. The analysis shows there is no significant difference between writing motivation ($F=1.809$, $p=0.132$) and writing anxiety ($F=0.061$, $p=0.993$) across disciplines. The null hypothesis is therefore accepted.

Table 7. ANOVA for Writing Motivation and writing Anxiety across disciplines.

Category		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Writing motivation	Between groups	1.887	4	.472	1.809	.132
	Within groups	28.940	111	.261		
	Total	30.827	115			
Writing anxiety	Between groups	.067	4	.017	.061	.993
	Within groups	30.514	111	.275		
	Total	30.581	115			

Conclusion

This study examined learners' writing motivation and writing anxiety, the relationship between these variables, and differences across academic disciplines. This section summarises the findings in relation to each research question and relates with relevant past studies. In relation to learners' perceptions of writing motivation, the findings indicated that learners demonstrate a high level of writing motivation. To elaborate, among the three motivational components, task value was found to be the strongest aspect, which suggests that learners perceive writing as important, useful, and relevant to their academic development. Not only that, self-efficacy was also positively perceived. This can be said that learners believe they are capable of completing writing tasks despite the challenges they encountered. Thus, this finding is in accordance with Zhang et al. (2014), who reported that learners who value writing tasks and possess confidence in their abilities are more likely to remain motivated and engaged in writing activities. In addition, the result further supports Bandura (1977) self-efficacy theory, which emphasises that learners' beliefs in their capabilities play a crucial role in sustaining motivation. In terms of cognitive anxiety, learners reported that there are noticeable concerns related to evaluation, grades, and fear of negative judgement. To illustrate, cognitive anxiety emerged as the most prominent type of writing anxiety, which led to stress and fear of poor performance remain as prominent issues in second language writing. This finding is in line with Cheng (2004) study, which identified cognitive anxiety as the dominant dimension of writing anxiety among ESL learners. Hence, it can be said that learners' anxiety was largely driven by concerns over assessment and peer comparison.

Regarding somatic anxiety, the findings revealed that learners experience physical symptoms such as tension, panic, and discomfort, particularly under time constraints or unexpected writing tasks. However, somatic anxiety was less dominant compared to cognitive anxiety. This suggests that physical reactions come after cognitive concerns. This finding aligns with Cheng (2004), who noted that somatic anxiety often connects with cognitive anxiety but it tends to be less dominant. The presence of somatic symptoms further indicates that writing anxiety affects learners both cognitively and physically. In relation to avoidance behaviour, participants demonstrated a moderate tendency to avoid writing tasks, particularly when they were given a choice. However, many learners still showed willingness to write in English when required or when opportunities arose. This suggests that avoidance behaviour is present but not overwhelming. This finding is consistent with Cheng (2004) framework, which proposes that avoidance behaviour often develops as a response to prolonged cognitive and somatic anxiety. The result indicates that while learners may experience anxiety, motivation may still encourage participation in writing activities. The findings also revealed a weak but significant positive relationship between writing motivation and writing anxiety. This suggests that motivated learners may still experience anxiety, particularly because they place importance on writing tasks and outcomes. This finding is in accordance with Rahmat (2021) cyclical model of writers' beliefs, which explains that motivation and anxiety can coexist and influence each other throughout the writing process. Hence, it can be said that higher motivation does not necessarily reduce anxiety but it may intensify learners' concern about their writing performance.

Finally, the analysis across academic disciplines indicated no significant differences in writing motivation and writing anxiety. This suggests that writing-related motivation and anxiety are common experiences among tertiary learners regardless of field of

study. This finding supports previous research highlighting that second language writing challenges are not discipline-specific but are influenced by shared affective and cognitive factors among learners (Syarifudin, 2020). Overall, the findings found that writing motivation and writing anxiety are interrelated and coexist in complex ways. To elaborate, high motivation, particularly in task value and self-efficacy, does not necessarily eliminate anxiety but may exist simultaneously with cognitive concerns related to performance and evaluation. These findings are largely consistent with past studies and theoretical frameworks discussed in the literature, confirming the continued relevance of examining affective factors in second language writing. In theoretical and conceptual implications, the findings of the present study provide practical support for the relevance of Self-Efficacy Theory (Bandura, 1977) in explaining the relationship between writing motivation and writing anxiety. As outlined in the theoretical framework, Bandura's theory proposes that individuals' beliefs in their capabilities influence their motivation, emotional reactions, and performance. The results of this study demonstrate that learners with higher writing motivation tend to experience lower levels of writing anxiety, particularly cognitive anxiety, which aligns with Bandura's claim that stronger self-efficacy beliefs help individuals manage stress and anxiety more effectively. The findings are also consistent with Cheng (2004) idea of writing anxiety as a complex concept. Students who reported lower motivation showed greater tendencies toward cognitive anxiety and avoidance behaviour, suggesting that insufficient motivation may weaken learners' confidence and increase fear of negative evaluation. This supports the argument that writing anxiety is not merely an emotional response but is closely tied to students' motivational beliefs and self-perceptions. Therefore, integrating Self-Efficacy Theory with Cheng's model provides a more comprehensive understanding of how motivation, anxiety, and writing performance interact in second language writing contexts. This confirms the suitability of the selected theoretical framework and highlights its relevance in explaining the observed findings.

In pedagogical implications, the findings of this study carry several important pedagogical implications for writing instruction. First, teachers should recognise that writing anxiety is closely linked to learners' motivation and confidence. Instructional practices that overly emphasise accuracy and error correction may unintentionally increase cognitive anxiety, especially among less confident writers. Instead, teachers are encouraged to provide supportive and constructive feedback that focuses not only on weaknesses but also on students' progress and strengths. Second, teaching practices should aim to enhance students' writing motivation by creating opportunities for mastery experiences, such as scaffolded writing tasks and gradual increases in task difficulty. Peer feedback activities, as highlighted in previous studies, can also serve as a valuable strategy to reduce anxiety by fostering social support and reducing fear of negative evaluation. Encouraging collaborative writing and discussion may help students perceive writing as a shared learning process rather than a high-stakes individual task. From the students' perspective, students should be encouraged to develop positive writing habits and realistic expectations of their writing abilities. Awareness-raising activities that help students understand that writing anxiety is common and manageable may reduce avoidance behaviour. Developing self-reflection skills and realistic goal-setting strategies can further support students in building confidence and sustaining motivation in writing tasks.

Although the present study offers insights into the relationship between writing motivation and writing anxiety, several areas remain open for further investigation. Future research may expand the scope of this study by involving participants from different educational levels, such as secondary school students or postgraduate learners, to examine whether similar patterns of motivation and anxiety existed across proficiency levels and academic contexts. Comparative studies across institutions or disciplines may also provide a broader understanding of how these factors can influence writing-related emotional variables. Future researchers could also explore additional students' variables that may interact with writing motivation and writing anxiety, such as feedback preferences or learning strategies. Examining these variables may help clarify how different psychological and instructional factors can influence students' writing experiences and performance. In particular, further studies could investigate how specific types of feedback or classroom practices contribute to reducing cognitive anxiety and avoidance behaviour. In terms of methodology, future studies may also adopt mixed-methods or qualitative approaches, such as interviews, reflective journals, or classroom observations, to gain deeper insights into students' perceptions and experiences of writing anxiety. Such approaches would complement quantitative findings by providing richer explanations of why students feel anxious and how motivation shapes their responses to writing tasks. Finally, future research may also consider examining writing anxiety in technology-mediated or online writing environments, as digital platforms are now a form of modern writing instruction.

Acknowledgement

This research is self-funded.

Conflict of interest

The authors confirm that there is no conflict of interest involve with any parties in this research study.

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