

Exploring Writing Anxiety and Writing Strategies among Undergraduates

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ABSTRACT

Writing is an important but difficult skill in foreign language learning, particularly in Japanese as a foreign language (JFL). This is especially true when learning JFL, which is characterised by its complex writing systems and grammatical structures. Many students struggle with writing, which can have a negative impact on their confidence and participation in the classroom. Given this, the purpose of this study is to investigate how learners perceive writing anxiety and use writing strategies in Japanese composition. Ninety-one students in the Japanese preparatory programme were given a survey questionnaire with a 5-point Likert scale. The instrument was modified from Raooft et al. (2017) and Cheng (2004), and the data was analysed using SPSS correlation analysis. According to the findings, JFL students are more likely to experience cognitive anxiety, particularly the fear of making mistakes and receiving poor grades. Despite this, the majority of students reported looking for additional opportunities to practise writing outside of the classroom and did not avoid writing assignments. Furthermore, the study found that students actively use writing techniques in five areas: metacognitive, effort regulation, cognitive, social, and affective strategies. Regular checks are also made to ensure that grammar is correct. Overall, the study found that JFL students exhibit both strategic writing behaviour and writing anxiety, emphasising the importance of strategy-based, supportive instruction.

Keywords: Writing anxiety, writing strategies, foreign language learning

INTRODUCTION

Writing is a key skill in foreign language learning, yet many learners continue to struggle with it, including those learning Japanese. Writing in Japanese can be challenging because learners need to manage complex writing systems, grammar rules, and appropriate ways of expressing ideas. These challenges often place both mental and emotional pressure on learners. Therefore, before reading this paper, it is important to note that the focus of this study is on learners' experiences and perceptions of writing, particularly their feelings of anxiety and their use of writing strategies, rather than on writing performance itself. One important factor that influences writing is writing anxiety, which refers to feelings of worry, tension, or fear experienced during writing tasks. Recent studies show that writing anxiety is still common in second and foreign language learning. Learners who experience higher levels of anxiety often feel less confident and tend to participate less actively in writing activities. For example, Elbaoui et al. (2024) found that writing anxiety has a negative effect on learners' engagement and self-esteem, highlighting the continued importance of emotional factors in the writing process.

Besides emotional factors, writing strategies are also important in helping learners during the writing process. Writing strategies are the methods learners use to plan and manage their writing, such as thinking about ideas before writing, revising drafts, controlling effort, and handling emotions while writing. Recent studies show that using writing strategies can help learners deal with writing difficulties and reduce emotional stress. For example,

Shen et al. (2024) found that learners use metacognitive strategies to control their writing process and manage their emotional responses, showing a clear link between strategy use and writing anxiety. Although writing anxiety and writing strategies have been widely studied, most previous research has focused on English language learners. Studies involving Japanese learners remain limited, even though writing in Japanese involves unique linguistic challenges. In addition, recent reviews indicate that the relationship between writing anxiety and writing strategies has not been fully examined, particularly in non-English language contexts (Guo et al., 2025). Therefore, this study aims to explore how Japanese learners perceive their writing anxiety and how they perceive their use of writing strategies, in order to gain a clearer understanding of the relationship between these two factors.

Writing remains one of the most challenging skills in second and foreign language learning, particularly among undergraduate learners. Recent studies show that many learners continue to experience writing anxiety, which affects their confidence, emotional responses, and engagement in writing tasks (Putra et al., 2024; Guo et al., 2025). Learners who experience high levels of writing anxiety often report fear of making mistakes, difficulty expressing ideas, and a tendency to avoid writing activities, which may negatively influence their overall learning experience (Guo et al., 2025). These findings indicate that writing anxiety remains a relevant concern in current language learning contexts. In addition to emotional factors, writing strategies play an important role in supporting learners throughout the writing process. Writing strategies include actions such as planning ideas, revising drafts, monitoring progress, regulating effort, and managing emotions during writing tasks. Recent research indicates that learners who actively use writing strategies are better able to cope with writing difficulties and manage academic writing demands more effectively (Shen et al., 2024). In particular, the use of metacognitive strategies has been associated with lower levels of writing anxiety, suggesting that strategic behaviour may help learners control negative emotions related to writing (Shen et al., 2024).

However, several issues remain evident in recent research. Many studies examine writing anxiety and writing strategies as separate constructs, without fully exploring how learners perceive the relationship between these two factors. Although some research acknowledges that strategy use may influence anxiety levels, learners' own perceptions of how anxiety and strategy use interact during writing are not always examined in depth (Guo et al., 2025). In addition, most existing studies focus mainly on English language learners, while learners of other foreign languages receive less attention. For Japanese learners, writing presents unique challenges due to the complexity of the writing system, grammatical structures, and conventions of expression. These challenges may influence both learners' writing anxiety and their choice of writing strategies. Recent qualitative research also shows that writing anxiety can occur at different stages of the writing process, influenced by idea generation, organisation, and feedback experiences (Sun & Chan, 2024). Therefore, this study aims to explore the relationship between writing anxiety and writing strategies among Japanese learners by focusing on learners' perceptions of their writing anxiety and their use of writing strategies. This study is done to explore the relationship between writing anxiety and writing strategies. Specifically, this study is done to answer the following questions:

RQ1: How do learners perceive their writing anxiety?

RQ2: How do learners perceive their use of writing strategies?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework of the Study

According to the theory of writing introduced by Flowers and Hayes (1981), writing is a dynamic process that involves three main stages. The first stage, planning, is where a writer generates ideas, sets goals, and organizes content before putting pen to paper. It is a stage of exploration and strategy, where thoughts take shape and a direction for the writing is formed. The second stage, translating, involves turning those ideas into actual words on the page. Here, abstract thoughts are transformed into coherent sentences, paragraphs, and structure. Finally, the reviewing stage allows the writer to step back, read, evaluate, and revise their work to improve clarity, coherence, and overall quality. Importantly, Flower and Hayes emphasized that these stages are not strictly linear—writers often move back and forth between planning, translating, and reviewing, refining their work

continuously. Hence, writing, in this sense, becomes a fluid, thoughtful, and highly human process of problem-solving and expression.

Skinner (1963) proposed a process called operant conditioning, where a specific consequence can change the frequency or probability of a behaviour. He believed that only the behaviours followed by reinforcement are stamped in or strengthened, while those who do not experience phenomena called operant extinction. An example of an aspiring writer was given: when the writer receives rejection from publishers and when the behaviour (writing) is not reinforced, extinction occurs. Consequently, the writer becomes unable to write and experiences “writer’s cramp” (Skinner, 1953, p.72). The argument is that this is not merely a lack of will but an extremely low probability of response due to the non-reinforcement. This theory is particularly relevant to the study of writing anxiety and strategies, in which learners require consistent reinforcement to be able to continue writing. These reinforcements often take the form of education tokens such as marks and grades (Skinner, 1953). In addition, social reinforces shape and maintain writing behaviour in the form of attention, approval and affection. On the other hand, discouragement represents a failure of response, as it gives a sign that the expected reinforcement has not been provided (Skinner, 1953). Therefore, in addressing writing anxiety and thus improving writing strategies in foreign language learning, it is crucial to analyse the learners’ behaviours thorough the lens of operant conditioning to better understand how reinforcement works.

The self-fulfilling prophecy theory by Merton (1948) explains how individuals’ beliefs or expectations can shape their behaviour, resulting in the realisation of those beliefs. This theory has been widely used in educational settings to understand how students’ academic beliefs and expectations influence their learning outcomes. Interestingly, recent studies demonstrate this theory has a strong theoretical relationship with writing anxiety and writing strategies among students. According to Rahmat et al. (2021), in the context of writing, this theory explains how students develop high levels of writing anxiety if they believe they are poor writers, which may affect their writing performance. Similarly, Guo et al. (2025) reported that anxiety gives big impact to writing performance especially for second language learners. This means that when students approach a writing task with negative expectations, such as fearing failure or criticism, they may avoid writing, which results in poor writing; when this belief is reinforced, it creates a cycle of writing anxiety. On the other hand, students who believe they are good writers experience lower writing anxiety and as a result, these students may employ effective writing strategies, which often leads to improve writing performance (Cao et al., 2025). These findings highlight that interventions such as positive expectations, confidence, and helpful feedback can break the writing anxiety cycle, which later improves students’ writing skills.

Past Studies on Writing Strategies

Research on writing strategies among learners of Japanese as a second or foreign language (JSL/JFL) indicates that strategic behaviour plays an important role in helping students manage the cognitive complexity of writing and regulate affective factors such as anxiety. Writing strategies are generally understood as deliberate and conscious actions that learners use to plan, organise, draft, monitor, and revise their written work (Raoofti et al., 2014, 2017). While early investigations into writing strategies were primarily conducted in English as a second language (ESL) contexts, their theoretical frameworks have provided a foundation for examining strategy use in Japanese language learning environments. In one influential study, Raoofti et al. (2014) explored the writing strategies employed by Malaysian university students learning English as a second language. The findings revealed that learners frequently applied a combination of cognitive and metacognitive strategies, including brainstorming ideas, drafting outlines, revising content, and checking language accuracy. These strategies enabled students to manage the demands of writing by dividing the task into more manageable stages. Although the study focused on English rather than Japanese, its multidimensional framework offers valuable insights for understanding writing strategy use in JSL/JFL contexts, where learners face additional challenges such as complex grammar structures and multiple writing systems.

Building on this framework, Yunus et al. (2022) investigated writing strategy use among undergraduate students studying Japanese at a Malaysian university. Their findings showed that learners commonly employed cognitive strategies (e.g., organising ideas and monitoring grammar), metacognitive strategies (e.g., planning and evaluating their work), and social strategies (e.g., seeking assistance from peers). The study also identified effort

regulation strategies, such as maintaining concentration despite difficulty. Notably, the researchers reported a relationship between strategy use and lower levels of self-reported anxiety, suggesting that students who actively engaged in strategic writing behaviours were better able to cope with emotional challenges during composition tasks. Taken together, these studies suggest that writing strategies among JSL/JFL learners are multidimensional and dynamic. They encompass cognitive, metacognitive, social, and affective components that support learners throughout the writing process. Moreover, more proficient learners tend to demonstrate greater awareness and use of higher-order strategies, which may contribute to improved writing performance and reduced anxiety. Despite these findings, limited research has directly examined how writing strategies interact with writing anxiety specifically within undergraduate Japanese language classrooms. This gap highlights the need for further investigation into how learners perceive and utilise writing strategies in relation to their emotional experiences, which forms the basis of the present study.

Past Studies on Writing Anxiety

Research on writing anxiety in Japanese as a second or foreign language (JSL/JFL) has steadily grown, drawing attention to the distinctive emotional and cognitive challenges posed by the Japanese writing system. One of the earliest and most influential studies in this area was conducted by Kitano (2001), who investigated anxiety among university students learning Japanese as a foreign language. Although the study addressed foreign language anxiety more broadly, writing emerged as one of the most anxiety-provoking skills. Students reported a strong fear of negative evaluation, particularly when their written work was graded by instructors or compared with that of their peers. Kitano (2001) further observed that learners' perceived competence played a significant role in shaping their anxiety levels; students with lower self-confidence tended to experience higher levels of anxiety. This study laid important groundwork by demonstrating that emotional factors significantly affect performance in Japanese language classrooms, especially in productive skills such as writing.

Building on this perspective, Mori et al. (2007) examined learners' perceptions of kanji learning and its relationship to language performance. Although their research did not directly measure writing anxiety, it revealed that difficulties in recognising and producing kanji were associated with increased stress and reduced confidence in written tasks. Given that Japanese writing involves mastery of multiple scripts—hiragana, katakana, and kanji—learners often face a substantial cognitive burden when composing texts. The authors suggested that the complexity of the orthographic system may indirectly contribute to writing anxiety by interrupting writing fluency and increasing self-monitoring during composition. More recent studies have examined writing anxiety more directly within JFL contexts. Oi (2023), for example, investigated writing anxiety among first-year university students enrolled in Japanese language courses. Using an adapted writing anxiety scale, the study found that cognitive anxiety—particularly fear of poor grades and negative evaluation—was the most prominent dimension. Students frequently expressed concern about grammatical accuracy and correct kanji usage, indicating that linguistic precision strongly influenced their emotional responses. The findings also revealed a negative relationship between self-confidence and anxiety, reinforcing the view that learners' beliefs about their writing ability shape their affective experiences.

Similarly, Sugahara (2023) explored writing anxiety among Japanese high school learners and reported that anxiety levels varied depending on task type. Timed writing assignments and formal examinations generated higher levels of cognitive and somatic anxiety compared to low-stakes classroom practice. Sugahara (2023) concluded that evaluative pressure, rather than the act of writing itself, was a key factor contributing to anxiety. Although the participants were secondary school students, the findings are highly relevant to university contexts, where timed and graded writing tasks are common. At the undergraduate level, Yunus et al. (2022) investigated the relationship between writing anxiety and strategy use among Japanese language learners. Their quantitative findings indicated moderate levels of writing anxiety, particularly in tasks requiring accurate grammar and orthographic precision. Notably, the study identified a significant negative correlation between strategy use and anxiety levels. Students who reported using cognitive and metacognitive strategies—such as planning, revising, and monitoring their grammar—tended to experience lower anxiety. This suggests that strategic behaviour may serve as a coping mechanism that helps learners regulate their emotional responses during writing tasks.

More recently, Tanaka (2025) examined how collaborative learning environments influence writing-related anxiety in JFL classrooms. The study found that students engaged in group writing tasks experienced lower anxiety and greater confidence compared to those working individually. Collaborative activities appeared to reduce fear of negative evaluation by fostering peer support and shared responsibility. These findings highlight the importance of classroom design and instructional approaches in shaping learners' emotional experiences during writing.

Overall, previous research indicates that writing anxiety in JFL contexts is shaped by multiple interacting factors, including fear of evaluation, orthographic complexity, task demands, self-confidence, and classroom environment. While these studies have provided valuable insights into the causes and potential moderating factors of writing anxiety, further research is needed to better understand how anxiety interacts with writing strategy use among undergraduate learners, which is the central focus of the present study.

Conceptual Framework of the Study

The theory of self-fulfilling prophecy (Merton, 1948) states that fear belongs in a cycle. In the context of this study, writers begin by fearing writing task. This fear is manifested in the form of writing anxiety. In order to reduce anxiety, writers depend on the use of writing strategies (Rahmat, 2022). Different strategies can facilitate different aspects of the writing process. Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework of the study. This study explores the relationship between writing anxiety and writing strategies. In the context of this study, the variable writing anxiety is supported by constructs by Cheng (2004) of writing anxiety and they are (i) cognitive anxiety, (ii) somatic anxiety and (iii) avoidance behaviour. Next, the variable writing strategies is supported by the constructs by Raoofi, et.al (2017) and they are (i) metacognition, (ii) effort regulation, (iii) cognitive, (iv) social and (v) affective strategies. Additionally, this study also explores if there is a relationship between writing anxiety and writing strategies.

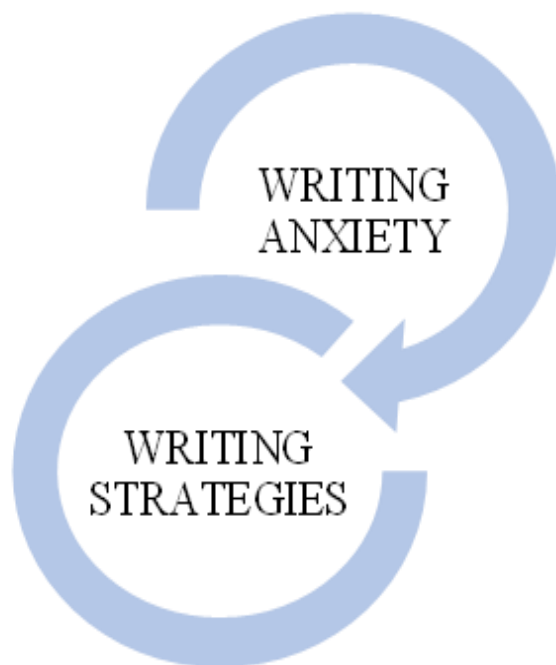


Figure 1- Conceptual Framework of the Study

Relationship between writing anxiety and writing strategies

METHODOLOGY

This quantitative study is done to explore the relationship between writing anxiety and writing strategies. A convenient sample of 91 participants responded to the survey. The instrument used is a 5-point Likert-scale survey

and is rooted from Cheng (2004) and Raoofi et. al (2017) to reveal the variables in table 3 below. Table 1 below 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 1- Likert Scale Use

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

Table 2- Distribution of Items in the Survey

SECT	VARIABLE	CONSTRUCTS	No of Items	Tot	Cronbach Alpha
B	Writing Anxiety (Cheng, 2004)	Cognitive	8	20	.840
		Somatic	6		
		Avoidance Behaviour	6		
C	Writing Strategies (Raoofi et al., 2017)	Metacognitive	7	24	.934
		Effort Regulation	4		
		Cognitive	6		
		Social	4		
		Affective	3		
		Total		44	.862

Table 2 presents the distribution of items used in the survey. The questionnaire consists of 44 items divided into two main sections. Section B focuses on Writing Anxiety adapted from Cheng (2004), which includes three constructs: Cognitive (8 items), Somatic (6 items), and Avoidance Behaviour (6 items), with a total of 20 items and a Cronbach’s alpha value of .840, indicating good reliability. Section C examines Writing Strategies based on Raoofi et al. (2017), covering five constructs: Metacognitive (7 items), Effort Regulation (4 items), Cognitive (6 items), Social (4 items), and Affective (3 items), resulting in 24 items with a high Cronbach’s alpha of .934. Overall, the survey demonstrates strong internal consistency, with an overall reliability coefficient of .862.

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

In order to determine the internal reliability of the instrument, reliability analysis is done. Table 3 above 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 .840 for writing anxiety and .934 for writing strategies. The overall Cronbach alpha for all 44 items is .862, 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.

FINDINGS

Demographic Analysis

According to Zienefuss et al. (2021), researchers report demographic data in percentages to establish sample representatives and allow for generalisability 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 -Percentage for Demographic Profile.

Question	Demographic Profile	Categories	Percentage (%)
1	Gender	Male	59%
		Female	41%
3	Course	Science & Technology	58%
		Business, Social Sciences & Humanities	42%

Table 4 above shows the percentage for the demographic profile. 59% of the respondents are male students while 41% are female. When it comes to course, 58% of the respondents are from Science & Technology courses while 42% are from Business, Social Sciences & Humanities courses.

Descriptive Statistics

Why is there a need to report the mean and standard deviation? According to Vetter (2017), Mean (M) represents the average, or centre of a data set. Standard deviation (SD) indicates the typical distance of individual observations from the mean which shows the data's variability or spread. A low SD means the data points are clustered close to the mean while a high SD indicates they are more spread out. It is good to have a high SD.

Writing Anxiety

This section presents data to answer research question 1- How do learners perceive their writing anxiety? In the context of this study, this is measured by (i) cognitive, (ii) somatic and (ii) avoidance behaviour.

(i) Table 5- Mean for Cognitive Anxiety (CA)

ITEM	Mean	SD
CAQ1. While writing in Japanese, I feel nervous.	2.91	1.06
CAQ2. While writing Japanese compositions, I feel worried and uneasy if I know they will be evaluated.	3.10	1.09
CAQ3. I worry that my Japanese compositions are a lot worse than others'.	2.78	1.12
CAQ4. If my Japanese composition is to be evaluated, I would worry about getting a very poor grade.	3.43	1.21
CQQ5. I'm afraid that other students would deride my Japanese composition if they read it.	2.81	1.18
CAQ6. I worry at all about what other people would think of my Japanese compositions.	2.80	1.18
CAQ7. I'm afraid of my Japanese composition being chosen as a sample to be discussed in class.	2.83	1.21
CAQ8. I'm afraid at all that my Japanese compositions would be rated as very poor.	2.62	1.13

Table 5 presents the mean and standard deviations for cognitive anxiety. Overall, the mean scores indicate moderate levels of cognitive anxiety across items with range from 2.62 to 3.43. The highest mean score was

reported for learners' concern in receiving bad grade ($M = 3.43$, $SD = 1.21$), whereas the lowest mean score was the fear of getting a very poor rated grade for Japanese compositions ($M = 2.62$, $SD = 1.13$).

(ii) Table 6- Mean for Somatic Anxiety (SA)

ITEM	Mean	SD
SAQ1. I feel my heart pounding when I write Japanese compositions under time constraint.	2.81	1.19
SAQ2. My mind often goes blank when I start to work on a Japanese composition.	2.98	1.14
SAQ3. I tremble or perspire when I write Japanese compositions under time pressure.	2.81	1.01
SAQ4. My thoughts become jumbled when I write Japanese compositions under time constraint.	3.00	0.98
SAQ5. I often feel panic when I write Japanese compositions under time constraint.	2.96	1.10
SAQ6. I freeze up when unexpectedly asked to write Japanese compositions.	2.49	1.02

Table 6 shows the mean and standard deviations for somatic anxiety. Overall, the mean scores ranged from 2.49 to 3.00, indicating a generally low level of somatic anxiety among learners. The highest mean score was recorded for learners' experience of having jumbled thoughts when writing Japanese compositions under time restrictions ($M = 3.00$, $SD = 0.98$). In contrast, the lowest mean score was learners' momentary inability to start writing when unexpectedly asked to write Japanese compositions ($M = 2.49$, $SD = 1.02$).

(iii) Table 7- Mean for Avoidance Behaviour (AB)

ITEM	Mean	SD
ABQ1. I often choose to write down my thoughts in Japanese.	2.49	1.20
ABQ2. I usually do my best to avoid writing Japanese compositions.	2.41	1.28
ABQ3. I do my best to avoid situations in which I have to write in Japanese.	2.46	1.13
ABQ4. Unless I have no choice, I would not use Japanese to write composition.	2.26	1.12
ABQ5. I would do my best to excuse myself if asked to write Japanese compositions.	3.02	1.12
ABQ6. I usually seek every possible chance to write Japanese compositions outside of class.	3.09	1.04

Table 7 presents the mean and standard deviations for avoidance behaviour. Overall, the mean scores ranged from 2.26 to 3.09, showing mostly low to moderate levels of avoidance behaviour. The highest mean score obtained was for seeking opportunities to write Japanese compositions outside of class ($M = 3.09$, $SD = 1.04$), followed closely by excusing oneself when asked to write Japanese compositions ($M = 3.02$, $SD = 1.12$). In contrast, the lowest mean score was recorded for reluctance in using Japanese for writing unless necessary ($M = 2.26$, $SD = 1.12$). The remaining items reported similarly low mean scores related to avoiding Japanese writing tasks and situations ($M = 2.41-2.49$).

Writing Strategies

This section presents data to answer research question 2- How do learners perceive their use of writing strategies? In the context of this study, this is measured by (i) metacognitive, (ii) effort regulation, (iii) cognitive, (iv) social and (v) affective.

(i) Table 8- Mean for METACOGNITIVE (MWS)

ITEM	Mean	SD
MWSQ1 I organize my ideas prior to writing.	3.66	0.90
MWSQ 2I check my spelling.	3.74	1.04

MWSQ 3 I check my writing to make sure it is grammatically correct.	3.84	0.97
MWSQ 4 I evaluate and re-evaluate the ideas in my essay.	3.77	1.02
MWSQ 5 I monitor and evaluate my progress in writing.	3.63	1.03
MWSQ6 I go through the planning stages in my writing.	3.47	1.02
MWSQ7I go through the revising and editing stages in my writing.	3.61	1.02

Table 8 presents the mean score for Metacognitive in writing. The results indicate that many of the respondents agreed that they regularly check their writing to make sure it is grammatically correct, as this statement records the highest mean score (M=3.84). The second highest mean value of (M=3.77) is observed in item 4, where most of the participants agreed that they evaluate and re-evaluate their ideas when writing essays. Following that, with only a slight difference, is the third highest mean score (M=3.74) where most of the participants agreed that they check their spelling during their writing process. In addition, some respondents believed that they could organize their ideas prior to writing (M=3.66). Lastly, the lowest mean score which is (M=3.47) indicates that a minority of respondents consistently engage in through planning stages in their writing.

(ii) Table 9- Mean for EFFORT REGULATION (ERS)

ITEM	Mean	SD
ERSQ 1I write a lot to develop my writing skills.	3.09	1.09
ERSQ 2I often work hard to do well in my writing even if I don't like English writing tasks.	3.59	0.99
ERSQ 3Even if the writing activities are difficult, I don't give up but try to engage in them.	3.78	0.93
ERSQ 4I concentrate as hard as I can when doing a writing task.	3.84	1.02

Table 9 shows the mean values for effort regulation in writing tasks. The results indicate that most students believe they normally concentrate as hard as they can when doing a writing task (M=3.84). The second highest mean reflects students' motivation in completing writing activities assigned in class even though most of the students responded that the writing activities are difficult. On average, the respondents try to engage with the writing activities, and they do not give up. (M=3.78). In contrast, the lowest mean which is (M=3.09) shows fewer respondents frequently practice writing extensively to improve their writing skills.

(iii) Table 10- Mean for COGNITIVE (CWS)

ITEM	Mean	SD
CWSQ1 I use memorized grammatical elements such as singular and plural forms, verb tenses, prefixes and suffixes, etc, in my writing	3.55	0.98
CWSQ 2I put newly memorized vocabulary in my sentences.	3.49	0.95
CWSQ 3In order to generate ideas for my writing, I usually engage myself in brainstorming.	3.60	0.89
CWSQ 4I use different words that have the same meaning.	3.22	0.85
CWSQ 5I use my experiences and knowledge in my writing.	3.73	0.85
CWSQ 6I try to use effective linking words to ensure clear and logical relationship between sentences or paragraphs	3.59	0.89

Table 10 shows the mean scores and standard deviations for the cognitive writing strategies (CWS) employed by the respondents. Overall, the mean values range from 3.22 to 3.73, indicating a generally moderate to high use of cognitive strategies in writing. The highest mean score was recorded for using experiences and knowledge in writing (M = 3.73, SD = 0.85), followed by generating ideas through brainstorming (M = 3.60, SD = 0.89) and using effective linking words to ensure coherence (M = 3.59, SD = 0.89). Slightly lower mean scores were observed for the use of memorized grammatical elements (M = 3.55, SD = 0.98) and newly memorized vocabulary (M = 3.49, SD = 0.95). The lowest mean score was reported for using different words with the same

meaning ($M = 3.22$, $SD = 0.85$). These findings show that respondents rely more on their experiences and ideas than on using a wide range of vocabulary when writing.

(iv) Table 11- Mean for SOCIAL (SWS)

ITEM	Mean	SD
SWSQ1 In order to generate ideas for my writing, I usually discuss the writing topic with a friend or classmate.	3.22	1.14
SWSQ 2After revising and editing my essay thoroughly, I ask a friend or my classmate to read and comment on it.	3.47	1.14
SWSQ 3I try to identify friends or classmates whom I can ask for help in my writing.	3.48	1.12
SWSQ 4When I have trouble writing my essay, I try to do it with my classmates or friends.	3.48	1.13

Table 11 presents the mean scores and standard deviations for social writing strategies (SWS) used by the respondents. Overall, the mean scores range from 3.22 to 3.48, indicating a moderate level of use of social strategies in writing. The highest mean scores were reported for identifying friends or classmates to seek help in writing and working together with classmates or friends when completing an essay (both $M = 3.48$), suggesting that peer support plays an important role in the writing process. Seeking feedback after revising and editing also showed a relatively high mean ($M = 3.47$), while discussing writing topics with friends or classmates to generate ideas recorded the lowest mean score ($M = 3.22$). These findings show that respondents depend more on help and collaboration with friends when writing and revising, rather than at the early stage of generating ideas.

(v) Table 12- Mean for AFFECTIVE (AWS)

ITEM	Mean	SD
AWSQ1I try to write an essay in class with confidence and ease.	3.25	0.99
AWSQ2I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of writing.	3.73	0.87
AWSQ3I encourage myself to write even when I am afraid of making mistakes	3.91	0.96

Table 12 presents the mean scores and standard deviations for affective writing strategies (AWS) used by the respondents. The results indicate a moderate to high level of use of affective strategies, with mean scores ranging from 3.25 to 3.91. The highest mean score was recorded for encouraging oneself to write despite fear of making mistakes ($M = 3.91$, $SD = 0.96$), followed by trying to relax when feeling afraid of writing ($M = 3.73$, $SD = 0.87$). Writing an essay in class with confidence and ease showed a comparatively lower mean score ($M = 3.25$, $SD = 0.99$). Overall, the results show that respondents try to motivate themselves and manage their feelings when writing, but they are not very confident writing in class.

CONCLUSION

Summary of Findings and Discussions

The objective of this study was to explore the relationship between writing anxiety and writing strategies among undergraduates based on Cheng (2004) and Raoofi et al. (2017). Due to that, two research questions were introduced:

RQ1 (How do learners perceive their writing anxiety?)

The findings revealed that writing anxiety is prevalent among foreign language learners, with numerous respondents experiencing cognitive anxiety, mainly worrying about receiving bad grades and performing poorly in Japanese compositions. According to Nor and Senom (2024), cognitive anxiety has been demonstrated to disrupt the writing process, particularly when learners are preoccupied with evaluative outcomes such as grades or perceived judgement. This finding is consistent with the research conducted by Kitano (2001), Mori et al.

(2007), Manoban and Sawetaiyaram (2017), and Djafri and Wimbari (2018), which discovered that learning Japanese as a foreign language can elicit high levels of language anxiety, particularly around difficult skills such as writing and orthography. From the viewpoint of the self-fulfilling prophecy theory by Merton (1948), students who expect to perform poorly may feel more anxious while writing. Worrying about failure can affect their focus which hinder the brainstorming and generation of ideas, and reduce overall performance, which in turn confirms their original negative expectations and fear. This cycle may explain reasons behind why learners worry about evaluation, particularly their grades, are a major cause of students' writing anxiety.

Interestingly, this pattern is consistent with recent research in second language writing contexts, where cognitive anxiety emerges as the most prominent dimension of writing anxiety among EFL and L2 learners (Li & Liu, 2013; Alzahrani & Alshaihi, 2023; Syarifudin, 2020; Talasee & Poopatwiboon, 2024). It was also discovered that, despite experiencing some anxiety, the majority of respondents stated that they did not avoid Japanese writing tasks. Instead, most of the respondents reported seeking for extra writing opportunities to write Japanese compositions outside of class. This behaviour may also signify a coping strategy rather than withdrawal. According to Skinner's theory (1963), students who experienced good results after additional practice, may feel encouraged and motivated to continue writing despite feeling anxious. This demonstrates that active participation in writing tasks can still occur even when the students feel anxious at the same time. This is especially true when learners know how to use effective and helpful strategies to support their writing. Similarly, Sugahara (2023) highlighted that students may feel uncertain or uncomfortable in classroom settings, prompting them to practice more in less pressured environments, which can reduce anxiety over time. Overall, the results suggest that students do experience writing anxiety, which is frequently associated with concerns regarding accuracy and making mistakes.

RQ2 (How do learners perceive their use of writing strategies?)

The results demonstrate that the majority of the respondents considered themselves as active users of writing strategies across all five categories: metacognitive, effort regulation, cognitive, social, and affective strategies. It has been revealed that most respondents consistently use of metacognitive strategies which regularly check grammatical accuracy when writing Japanese compositions. Oi (2023) and Sugahara (2023) emphasised that when students monitor language accuracy, it reflects on the learners' awareness of the complexity of Japanese writing systems. The results of this study also indicate that the strong use of effort regulation and cognitive strategies can be seen among the respondents, such as concentrating hard and using personal experiences and knowledge when doing a writing task. Similar to this, Yunus et al. (2022) found Japanese language learners overcoming challenges related to various writing systems and unfamiliar structures using these strategies. Additionally, the frequent use of social and affective strategies appears clearly when the majority of the respondents reported that they often seek help and guidance from friends and encourage themselves to write despite fear of making mistakes. This finding corresponds with research in JFL contexts (Oi, 2023; Sugahara, 2023) highlighting that peer support and self-encouragement can reduce anxiety, increase confidence, and promote sustained engagement in writing tasks. Overall, these results indicate that students made use of all five effective writing categories when engaging in Japanese composition.

Implications and Suggestions for Future Research

The results of this study indicate various practical implications for the instruction and acquisition of JFL. Since cognitive anxiety is common among JFL learners, particularly fear of poor grades and mistakes, it is suggested that educators should focus on using low-stakes and simpler writing activities as well as provide constructive and supportive feedback rather than focusing on evaluative pressure and merely correcting errors. Teachers should employ writing activities such as journals and reflective writing exercises in classrooms, which may help encourage greater confidence in writing. The results of this study also show that JFL classrooms should use a wide range of writing strategies because students actively use metacognitive, effort, cognitive, social, and affective strategies, suggesting writing activities should focus on teaching these strategies. Therefore, it is important that educators encourage peer collaboration, along with support, self-encouragement, and writing practice outside of classroom settings to help JFL learners build confidence and manage their anxiety. Future

study, should investigate at individual differences such as students' proficiency level or prior exposure to Japanese, to see how they affect writing anxiety and strategies use. Further study could explore the long-term relationship between writing anxiety and writing strategies use in Japanese learning contexts. Additionally, using qualitative methods such as interviews to understand how students cope with anxiety and use writing strategies can be done to provide deeper insight.

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