



# A Systematic Literature Review on Academic Writing Among Academicians: Challenges and Solutions

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## ABSTRACT

This systematic literature review (SLR) examines academic writing among academicians with a specific focus on the challenges encountered and the solutions proposed within higher education contexts. Academic writing is a core scholarly practice that directly influences research productivity, professional identity, and knowledge dissemination; however, many academicians continue to experience persistent difficulties that hinder effective scholarly communication. Despite growing research on academic writing, existing studies remain fragmented, often addressing isolated aspects of writing challenges without offering an integrated synthesis of challenges and solutions. To address this gap, the present review systematically synthesizes recent empirical evidence on academic writing challenges and support mechanisms among academicians. Guided by the PRISMA protocol, a comprehensive search was conducted using two major databases, Scopus and Web of Science. Advanced searching strategies were applied using four key thematic keyword clusters: (1) cognitive and linguistic challenges, (2) lack of confidence, (3) ethical issues, and (4) solutions and support mechanisms. Inclusion criteria were limited to peer-reviewed journal articles published in English within a defined recent timeframe. Following identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and quality appraisal procedures, 18 primary studies were retained for qualitative synthesis. The analysis revealed four dominant themes. Cognitive and linguistic challenges emerged as the most frequently reported obstacles, encompassing difficulties in critical thinking, genre conventions, source integration, and language proficiency. Issues related to confidence and sense of belonging were closely linked to academic identity formation and writing motivation. Ethical concerns, particularly plagiarism awareness and responsible use of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, represented an increasingly prominent challenge. In response, pedagogical and institutional supports, including academic literacies approaches, writing communities, mentoring, and structured publication guidance, were identified as key solutions. Overall, the review highlights academic writing as a multidimensional and socially situated practice and underscores the need for coordinated pedagogical and institutional strategies to support sustainable academic writing development among academicians.

**Keywords:** Academic writing; academicians; cognitive and linguistic challenges; research self-efficacy; pedagogical and institutional support

## INTRODUCTION

Academic writing is a fundamental skill for academicians, yet it presents numerous challenges that can impede their scholarly progress. This section discusses the background of the study, the statement of the problem, and the purpose of the study.

### Background of Study

Academic writing is essential for the dissemination of research and the advancement of knowledge. However, it is often perceived as a daunting task due to its complex requirements, including the need for clarity, coherence, and adherence to specific academic conventions (Akosile et al., 2025; Li, 2024). The challenges are particularly pronounced for non-native English speakers and international students, who must navigate additional linguistic



and cultural barriers (Akosile et al., 2025; W. Zhang & Zhang, 2025). These difficulties can hinder their ability to produce high-quality academic work, affecting their academic performance and career prospects (Harshalatha & Sreenivasulu, 2024; Tovar Viera et al., 2024).

### **Statement of Problem**

The primary problem addressed in this study is the array of challenges that academicians face in academic writing. These challenges can be categorized into four main themes: cognitive and linguistic challenges, lack of confidence, ethical issues, and the need for effective solutions and supports. Cognitive and linguistic challenges include difficulties with language proficiency, sentence construction, and the integration of ideas (Hadizadeh & Kanik, 2025; Y. Zhang et al., 2025). Lack of confidence often stems from self-doubt and the fear of academic scrutiny, which can be exacerbated by the high standards of academic writing (Canli & Yağiz, 2024; Listyani, 2025). Ethical issues, such as maintaining academic integrity and avoiding plagiarism, add another layer of complexity to the writing process (Suleimanova & Lykova, 2023; Uzun, 2024). Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that includes institutional support, tailored writing programs, and the use of technological tools (Akosile et al., 2025; Horstmanshof & Brownie, 2013).

### **Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this study is to identify and analyze the challenges faced by academicians in academic writing and to propose effective solutions to mitigate these difficulties. By understanding the specific obstacles and the strategies employed to overcome them, this study aims to provide insights that can enhance academic writing support systems and improve the overall writing proficiency of academicians.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

With reference to Figure 1 below, this section discusses past studies related to the multifaceted difficulties faced by academicians in academic writing, focusing on cognitive and linguistic challenges, lack of confidence, and ethical issues, while also discussing potential solutions and supports.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Two theories support the concept of writing demotivation. The theories are (a) writing apprehension and (b) Self-Determination Theory (SDT)

### **Writing Apprehension**

According to (Daly & Miller, 2019), writers have apprehension when it comes to completing assigned tasks. There are four core factors for this apprehension, and they are (a) avoidance of writing, where writers with apprehension avoid writing-related tasks. The next is fear of evaluation, where writers dread their written work being evaluated by instructors, peers, or superiors. The third factor is anxiety and tension. This is where writers experience a high level of tension when assigned writing tasks. The last factor is low self-confidence. This could stem from the writers' believing that they are weak writers and the believe snowbaled into low writing performance. A way to visualize this is its relation to (Merton, 1948)theory of self-fulfilling prophecy (Pygmalion effect). With reference to Figure 1 below, the writers begin with negative perceptions of evaluations. This negative perception influences how the writers attend to the writing task, which in turn influences how others believe of the writer. The written work may then get a negative assessment. The evaluation thus received would end up influencing the writers' belief of their future writing experiences.



Figure 1- Self-fulfilling Prophecy for Writers' Fear in Writing

### Self-Determination Theory (SDT)

Another way to look at writing demotivation is to relate it to SDT by (Ryan & Deci, 2000)). This theory looks at three basic needs of learners. The first need is (a) autonomy, which refers to the need of the learners to feel in control of their own learning. In the context of academic writing among academicians, they need to feel in control of their ability to write and publish academic articles. The second need is competence, and this refers to the learners' need to experience mastery. In the context of this SLR, this refers to the academic writers' need to feel they mastered the writing task. The last need is relatedness, and this is the need of the learners to feel connected and respected. Academic writers need to feel connected to the other academicians and also feel respected for what they have done.

### Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework of this SLR. This review is anchored by SDT by (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Writers feel a lack of autonomy because they face writing challenges, such as cognitive and linguistic. Next, their lack of competence is reflected when they display that they do not have confidence. This lack of confidence may push some writers to resort to complete reliance on AI assistance, which leads to ethical issues. Finally, offering solutions and support to the academicians may improve their need for relatedness.



Figure 1- Conceptual Framework of the Study:

Challenges and Solutions for Academic Writing among Academics

### Lack of Autonomy-Cognitive & Linguistic Challenges

The cognitive and linguistic dimensions of academic writing challenge students and tutors. These problems relate to sentence formation, word choice, and the coherence and cohesion of their language learning (Hadizadeh



& Kanik, 2025; Y. Zhang et al., 2025). Nonethnic English speakers particularly experience notable challenges for several reasons related to language proficiency and adaptation to various academic norms (Akosile et al., 2025; Y. Zhang et al., 2025). These cognitive and linguistic factors may constrain their expression of complex thoughts more effectively than do typically developing children, which in turn may cause frustration and low academic achievement in school (Harshalatha & Sreenivasulu, 2025; Tovar Viera et al., 2014).

### Lack of Competency

This is explored into two factors: lack of confidence and ethical issues.

### Lack of Confidence

Another challenge is lack of confidence in academic writing. Inhibiting self-doubt and fear of critique are all too common among academicians, which can obstruct any efforts for productive writing and result in procrastination (Canli & Yağiz, 2024; Listyani, 2025). This lack of confidence in their ability to write is correlated with most Brazilian students feeling that they are deficient in linguistic skills and feeling the pressure for academic writing (Hadizadeh & Kanik, 2025; Tovar Viera et al., 2024). To address this challenge, self-efficacy is developed through feedback that supports their efforts, peer encouragement, and opportunities to rehearse and improve (Akosile et al., 2025; Horstmanshof & Brownie, 2013).

### Ethical Issues

Ethical concerns in academic writing (i.e., plagiarism and honesty) are the central points of interest for scholars. Publish or perish pressure and a lack of knowledge on when quoting/reference can be used in the wrong way by author(s) (Suleimanova & Lykova, 2023; Uzun, 2024). Dealing with these issues would necessitate an extensive education on academic ethics along with some computerized software to check on plagiarism and the creation of an integrity culture within the educational institutions (Pretorius et al., 2025; Uzun, 2024).

### Increasing Relatedness- (through) Solutions and Supports

There are a number of solutions and supports that can be put in place in order to deal with these challenges. These include individualized writing skills programs that target academicians' specific needs, the adoption of AI-embedded grammar and structure-checking tools and institutional support offered through such resources as writing centers and peer mentoring (Akosile et al., 2025; Horstmanshof & Brownie, 2013; Y. Zhang et al., 2025). It is also the case that creating a supportive learning context and giving writers timely and productive feedback can be instrumental in improving academicians' writing skills and confidence (Akosile et al., 2025; Hadizadeh & Kanik, 2025; Horstmanshof & Brownie, 2013).

In summary, academic writing for academicians is challenging and daunting, but can be overcome with effective support and resources. By addressing cognitive and linguistic issues, building confidence, guaranteeing integrity and delivering solutions, colleges will assist scholars in producing better quality of research.

### Research Questions

This SLR is done to answer the following research questions (RQs). These questions are formulated using the PICO framework (Population, Interest, Context). The research questions are;

#### Research Question 1:

How do academics experience cognitive and linguistic challenges in academic writing within higher education contexts?

Population (P)	Academicians
Interest (I)	Cognitive and linguistic challenges in academic writing
Context (Co)	Higher education / academic writing environments

**Research Question 2:**

How does academic writing influence academicians' confidence and sense of belonging within academic communities?

Population (P)	Academicians
Interest (I)	Confidence and sense of belonging related to academic writing
Context (Co)	Academic and scholarly communities

**Research Question 3:**

What ethical issues do academicians encounter in academic writing practices within institutional and scholarly contexts?

Population (P)	Academicians
Interest (I)	Ethical issues in academic writing
Context (Co)	Institutional and scholarly publishing environments

**Research Question 4:**

How do pedagogical and institutional support mechanisms address academicians' challenges in academic writing within higher education institutions?

Population (P)	Academicians
Interest (I)	Pedagogical and institutional support for academic writing
Context (Co)	Higher education institutions

**MATERIAL AND METHODS****Identification**

In selecting several suitable papers for this report, the systematic literature review (SLR) process comprises three main phases. The phases are (i) Identification, (ii) Screening, and (iii) Eligibility. The last section discusses Data abstraction and Analysis.

The first step is keyword recognition and the quest for linked, similar terms based on the thesaurus, dictionaries, encyclopedia, and previous studies.

In the first step of the systematic review process, the present research work successfully retrieved 247 papers from both databases. Of the 440 articles found, 220 were found in Scopus, and 220 were found in Web of Science (WoS).

**Screening**

The next stage is screening. At this stage, the authors limit the search on Scopus and WoS using the criteria shown in Table 1 below. Only English articles were chosen. The timeline is 3 years. Only journal articles that were in the final stages were taken.

**TABLE 1**

**The selection criterion is searching**

Criterion	Inclusion	Exclusion
Language	English	Non-English
Time line	2024 – 2026	< 2024
Literature type	Journal (Article)	Conference, Book, Review
Publication Stage	Final	In Press

Accordingly, after all the relevant keywords were decided, search strings on Scopus and Web of Science (see Table 2) databases have been created.

This led to an initial elimination of 355 articles, leaving only 85 combined articles (49 articles from Scopus and 36 articles from WoS). The 85 articles were then checked for duplication, and 14 duplicates were found, leaving the total number of articles for the next stage as 71.

**TABLE 2: The search string.**

Scopus	( "demotivating factors" OR "barriers" OR "challenges" OR "obstacles" OR "hindrances" ) AND ( "academic writing" OR "scholarly writing" OR "research writing" OR "dissertation writing" OR "thesis writing" ) AND ( "academician*" OR "academic staff" OR "faculty" OR "university staff" OR "researcher*" ) AND ( "university*" OR "higher education" OR "tertiary education" )  FEB 2026
Web of Science	( "demotivating factors" OR "barriers" OR "challenges" OR "obstacles" OR "hindrances" ) AND ( "academic writing" OR "scholarly writing" OR "research writing" OR "dissertation writing" OR "thesis writing" ) AND ( "academician*" OR "academic staff" OR "faculty" OR "university staff" OR "researcher*" ) AND ( "university*" OR "higher education" OR "tertiary education" )  FEB 2026

**Eligibility**

This third stage is the eligibility stage. This stage began with 71 articles combined. The authors carefully read through each of the articles’ abstracts. All articles’ titles and key content were thoroughly reviewed at this stage to ensure that the inclusion requirements were fulfilled and fit into the present study with the current research aims. Hence, 19 articles were finally left (see Figure 2)

**Data Abstraction and Analysis**

An integrative analysis was used as one of the assessment strategies in this study to examine and synthesize a variety of research designs (quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods). To develop themes, the authors carefully analyzed 19 publications for relevant material related to the study's topics. They examined the methodology and research results of significant studies on the topic of this SLR.

The authors collaborated to develop themes based on the evidence presented throughout the study. They kept a log of their data analysis process to document relevant perspectives, analyses, or ideas. The authors ensured



consistency in theme design by comparing the results and discussing disagreements between themselves. Before undergoing analysis selection, the co-authors were selected based on their expertise in the chosen topic. The authors reviewed and refined the themes for consistency and ensured their validity. This expert review phase established the validity of each subtheme by ensuring clarity, importance, and suitability.

## Quality of Appraisal

According to the guidelines proposed by Kitchenham (2007), the appraisal began after the primary studies were selected. The selected primary studies for this SLR is 20 (Figure 2). This stage is where the authors analysed the articles to comply to the six qualities (six Questions) by Abouzahra et al.(2020). The scoring procedure for evaluating each criterion involves three possible ratings: "Yes" (Y) with a score of 1 if the criterion is fully met, "Partly" (P) with a score of 0.5 if the criterion is somewhat met but contains some gaps or shortcomings, and "No" (N) with a score of 0 if the criterion is not met at all.

- QA1. Is the purpose of the study clearly stated?
- QA2. Is the interest and the usefulness of the work clearly presented?
- QA3. Is the study methodology clearly established?
- QA4. Are the concepts of the approach clearly defined?
- QA5. Is the work compared and measured with other similar work?
- QA6. Are the limitations of the work clearly mentioned?

Table 3 outlines a quality assessment (QA) process used to evaluate a study based on specific criteria. Three experts assess the study using the criteria listed, and each criterion is scored as "Yes" (Y), "Partly" (P), or "No" (N). Here's a detailed explanation:

### 1. Is the purpose of the study clearly stated?

○ This criterion checks whether the study's objectives are clearly defined and articulated. A clear purpose helps set the direction and scope of the research.

### 2. Is the interest and usefulness of the work clearly presented?

○ This criterion evaluates whether the study's significance and potential contributions are well-explained. It measures the relevance and impact of the research.

### 3. Is the study methodology clearly established?

○ This assesses whether the research methodology is well-defined and appropriate for achieving the study's objectives. Clarity in methodology is crucial for the study's validity and reproducibility.

### 4. Are the concepts of the approach clearly defined?

○ This criterion looks at whether the theoretical framework and key concepts are clearly articulated. Clear definitions are essential for understanding the study's approach.

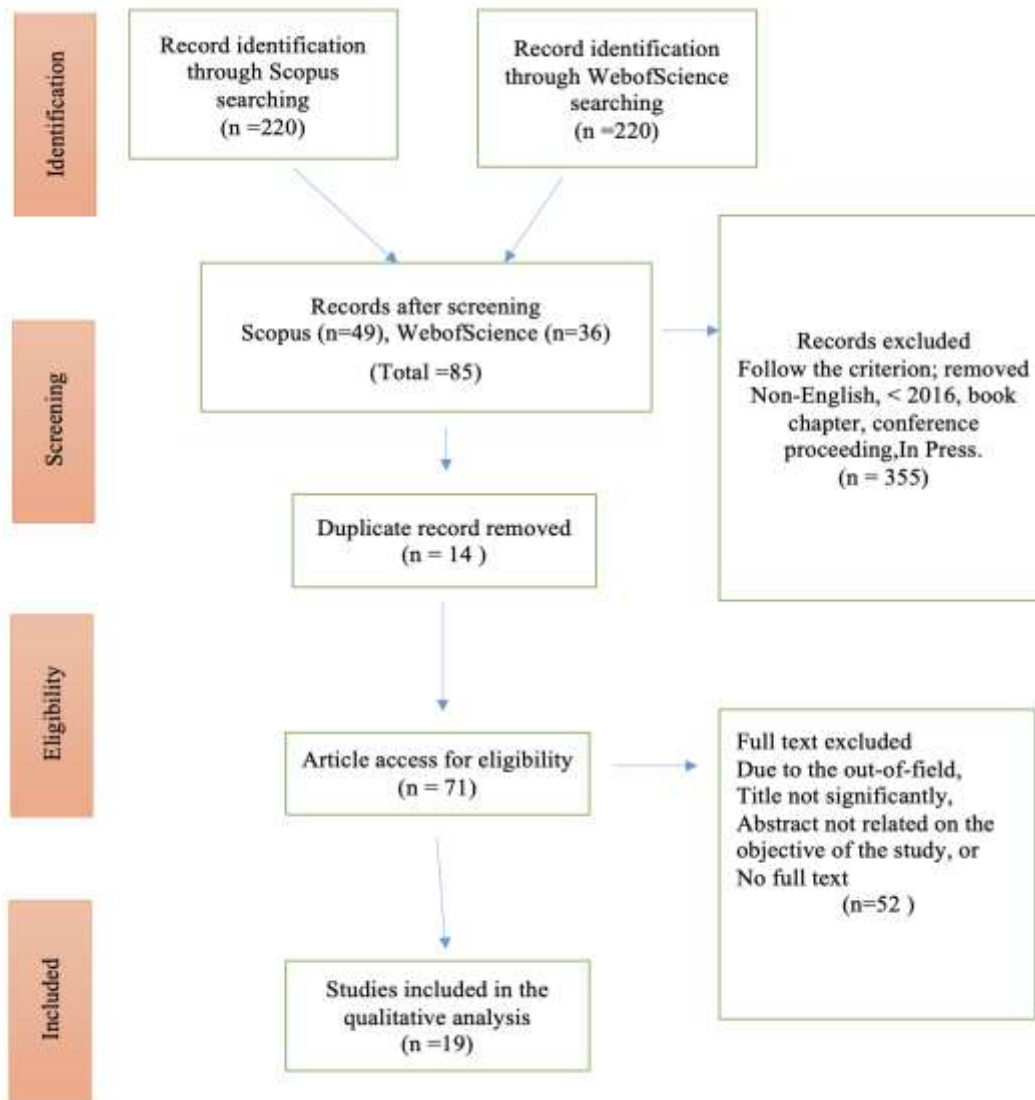
### 5. Is the work compared and measured with other similar work?

○ This evaluates whether the study has been benchmarked against existing research. Comparing with other studies helps position the work within the broader academic context and highlights its contributions.

### 6. Are the limitations of the work clearly mentioned?

Each expert independently assesses the study according to these criteria, and the scores are then totaled across all experts to determine the overall mark. For a study to be accepted for the next process, the total mark, derived

from summing the scores from all three experts, must exceed 3.0. This threshold ensures that only studies meeting a certain quality standard proceed further.



**Figure 2.** Flow diagram of the proposed searching study (Moher D, Liberati A, Tetzlaff J, 2009)

**Result and Finding**

**Quality Assessment**

Based on quality assessment, Table 3 shows the result of assessment performance for selected primary studies. Overall, the majority of studies reveal clear research purposes (QA1), strong relevance and usefulness (QA2), and well-defined conceptual frameworks (QA4), reflecting the maturity of research on demotivation for academic writing. The methodological clarity (QA3) is found to be generally adequate. Comparisons with prior work (QA5) and explicit discussion of limitations (QA6) are sometimes not adequately reported in abstracts. Studies scoring above 80% were prioritized as high-quality contributions informing the synthesis. In addition to that, articles scoring 50 and below would be deleted.

Table 3-QUALITY ASSESSMENT TABLE

AUTHOR/ YEAR	TITLE	PS	QA1	QA2	QA3	QA4	QA5	QA6	Total Mark	(%)
Han, W.; Apridayani,	Thai novice researchers' self-	PS1	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	P	4.5	75.0



A.; Sukarsih (2026)	efficacy, writing difficulties, and awareness of academic rigor									
Subandowo, D.; Sárdi, C.; Thresia, F. (2025)	An investigation of English academic writing strategies employed by Indonesian graduate students in an English medium instruction (EMI) context	PS2	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	4.0	66.7
Basu, S.; Nassim, S.; Mujeeb, H. (2025)	Socially Situated Critical Thinking in EFL Academic Writing: Pedagogical Challenges in Omani Higher Education	PS3	Y	Y	Y	Y	P	N	4.5	75.0
Stritch, J.M. (2025)	<i>Enhancing academic writing confidence and productivity: The impact of TUS WEWRITE!</i>	PS4	Y	P	P	P	N	N	2.5	41.7
Almawi, J.; Sayaf, A.M.; Fazel, H. (2025)	Academic Skills Competence and Challenges in International Academic Publishing: Perspectives from Faculty Members in Non-English-Speaking Higher Education	PS5	Y	Y	Y	Y	P	P	5.0	83.3
Laso, N.J.; Comelles Pujadas, E. (2025)	Exploring ERPP writing challenges: An investigation into the perceived and analysed difficulties of Spanish EFL university researchers;	PS6	Y	Y	P	P	Y	N	4.5	75.0
Firdaus, E.; Kosasih, A.; Syafei, M.; Ramdani, A.H.; Rahardja,	CHARACTER-BASED PERCEPTIONS OF PLAGIARISM IN SCIENTIFIC WRITING: A	PS7	Y	Y	Y	P	N	N	4.0	66.7



M.N.A. (2025)	STUDY OF ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION LECTURERS										
Harshalatha, S.; Sreenivasulu, Y. (2025)	Investigating the language issues in academic writing: A study on the research scholars at VIT University-Vellore	PS8	Y	Y	Y	P	N	P	4.5	75.0	
Nguyen, T.T. (2025)	Exploring Vietnamese EFL postgraduate students' competence in research writing	PS9	Y	Y	Y	P	N	N	4.0	66.7	
Mehta, S.R.; Tuzlukova, V. (2025)	Navigating English Language Publishing: Challenges Faced by Omani Arabic-Speaking Early Career Researchers	PS10	Y	Y	Y	P	N	N	4.0	66.7	
Nascimento, K.A.S.; Fialho, L.M.F.; da Costa, M.A.A. (2025)	Pedagogy professors' perspectives on the use of Artificial Intelligence in Academic work	PS11	Y	Y	Y	P	N	N	4.0	66.7	
Elshater, A.; Abusaada, H. (2025)	Brainstorming the context-text dialectic: epistemic reflections from early-career researchers on urban design research	PS12	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	4.0	66.7	
Shamsi, A.F.; Vanci Osam, U.V. (2024)	Scholarly Writing Experiences of Doctoral Students as Nonnative Speakers of English: Encountered Challenges and Needed Support	PS13	Y	Y	Y	P	N	N	4.0	66.7	
Pentang, J.T.;	Research Self- and Productivity of	PS14	Y	Y	Y	P	N	N	4.0	66.7	



Domingo, J.G. (2024)	Select Faculty Members: Inferences for Faculty Development Plan									
Isiaku, L.; Kwala, A.F.; Sambo, K.U.; Ukaegbu, F.C.; Isaku, H.H. (2024)	Academic Evolution in the Age of ChatGPT: An In-depth Qualitative Exploration of its Influence on Research, Learning, and Ethics in Higher Education	PS15	Y	Y	P	P	N	N	3.5	58.3
Lama, A.; Suhodolli, M. (2024)	Challenges in mastering academic writing: a case study of English language learners at the university for business and technology	PS16	Y	Y	Y	P	N	N	4.0	66.7
Jalongo, M.R. (2024)	Scholarly Publication During Doctoral Candidature: Obstacles, Benefits, and Strategies for Success	PS17	Y	Y	P	P	N	N	3.5	58.3
Benton Z, A.M.; Marwah, S. (2024)	The Challenges of Writing: The 'Long and Winding Road' of Belonging to Academia	PS18	Y	Y	P	P	N	N	3.5	58.3
Olsson, E.M.; Gelot, L.; Schaffer, J.; Litsegård, A. (2024)	Teaching Academic Literacies in international relations: towards a pedagogy of practice	PS19	Y	Y	P	P	N	N	3.5	58.3

Table 3 presents a structured quality appraisal of 19 empirical studies (PS1–PS19) published between 2024 and 2026 that examine academic writing, research self-efficacy, ethical concerns, and support mechanisms among academicians and postgraduate researchers across diverse EFL and non-English-speaking higher education contexts. Overall, the studies demonstrate moderate to high methodological quality, with total scores ranging from 3.5 (58.3.3%) to 5.0 (83.3%). Article 4 (P4) by Stritch (2025) scored 41.7% and is taken out of the list; leaving the list to 18 articles.

Most articles satisfied the primary screening criteria (PS) and consistently met Quality Assessment questions QA1–QA3, indicating clear research aims, appropriate designs, and relevant data collection methods. Higher-

scoring studies, such as Almawi et al. (2025) and Han et al. (2026), provided robust insights into academic skills competence, self-efficacy, and writing challenges, reflecting stronger analytical depth and contextual relevance. Several studies (e.g., Basu et al., 2025; Laso & Comelles Pujadas, 2025) partially met QA5 and QA6, suggesting some limitations in ethical transparency or reflexivity. In contrast, intervention- or perception-based studies focusing on confidence, belonging, or emerging technologies (e.g., Stritch, 2025; Isiaku et al., 2024) tended to score lower, primarily due to partial fulfillment of rigor-related criteria. Despite these variations, the majority of studies achieved scores above 66%, underscoring their credibility and contribution to understanding cognitive, linguistic, ethical, and institutional dimensions of academic writing. Collectively, the table highlights a methodologically sound evidence base that supports the thematic synthesis of challenges and solutions in academic writing among academicians.

### Concepts and Themes

Following a full-text eligibility assessment, 18 studies were thematically synthesized into four themes (cascaded from two major concepts). With reference to Figure 3 below, the analysis of the 18 studies revealed two main concepts. Each of the main concepts is supported by four themes. The two main concepts formed are (a) challenges and solutions. The concept of challenges is elaborated by three themes (T); T1 is cognitive and linguistic difficulties, T2 is lack of confidence, and T3 is ethical issues. The second concept is solutions. In the context of this SLR, solutions are presented in terms of support from two parties: pedagogical and institutional support.

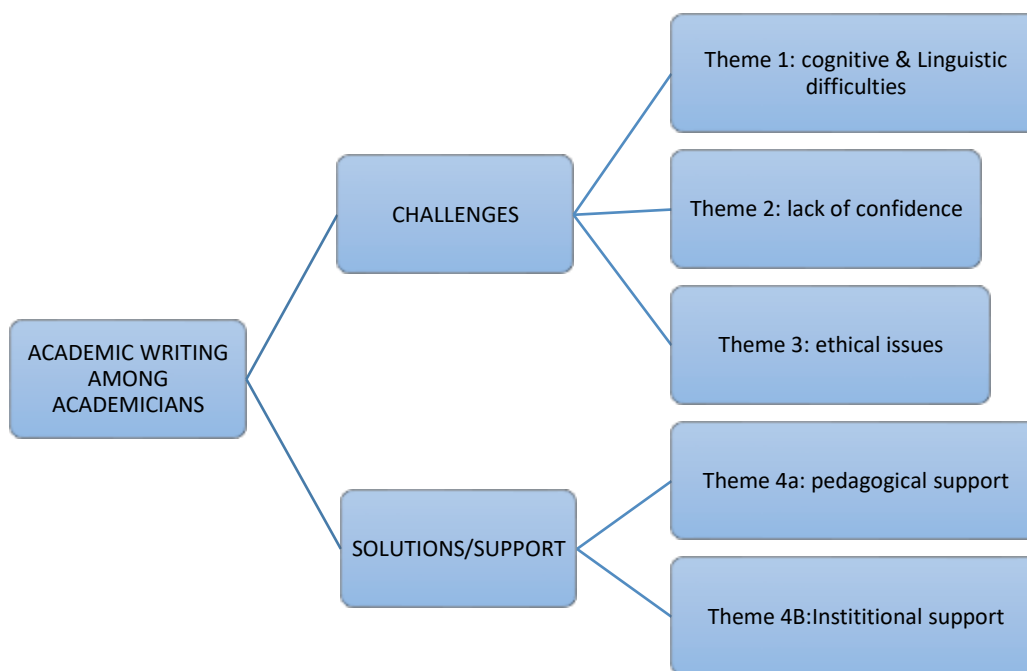


Figure 3- Summary of Emerging Themes from Primary Studies

### Challenges

#### Theme 1: Cognitive and Linguistic Difficulties

This theme answers research question 1: How do academics experience cognitive and linguistic challenges in academic writing within higher education contexts? The focus for this theme is the linguistic, cognitive, and genre-related challenges faced by students and researchers writing in English as an additional language. Table 4 presents the articles selected under this theme.

Table 4- Articles for Theme 1

PS	Article Title
PS2	English academic writing strategies in an EMI context



PS3	Socially Situated Critical Thinking in EFL Academic Writing
PS6	ERPP writing challenges among Spanish EFL researchers
PS8	Language issues in academic writing among research scholars
PS9	Vietnamese EFL postgraduate students' competence in research writing
PS10	Challenges faced by Omani Arabic-speaking early career researchers
PS13	Scholarly Writing Experiences of Doctoral Students as Nonnative Speakers of English
PS16	Challenges in mastering academic writing among EFL students

The reviewed abstracts (Table 4) consistently report that academic writing in EFL and EMI settings is characterized by multifaceted cognitive and linguistic challenges that contribute to reduced writing competence and, indirectly, demotivation.

Studies focusing on graduate and postgraduate students highlight difficulties across all stages of the writing process, including planning, drafting, and revision. For instance, Indonesian graduate students in EMI programmes demonstrated the use of numerous writing strategies; however, the need to employ extensive compensatory techniques indicates a persistent difficulty in managing high-stakes academic writing tasks (Subandowo, Sárdi, & Thresia). Similarly, Vietnamese EFL postgraduates displayed partial competence in information searching and source use but struggled with synthesis, evaluation, and accurate citation, suggesting limited control over research-based writing conventions (Nguyen). At the undergraduate level, limited development of critical thinking skills further constrained writing quality, as students encountered problems in constructing evidence-based arguments and maintaining clarity in academic discourse (Basu, Nassim, & Mujeeb). Collectively, these findings suggest that academic writing challenges in EFL/EMI contexts extend beyond surface-level language accuracy and reflect deeper issues related to rhetorical competence, critical engagement, and disciplinary literacy.

In addition to student populations, research involving doctoral candidates, early-career researchers, and research scholars indicates that academic writing challenges persist across academic stages and professional roles. Spanish EFL university researchers identified persistent lexical and grammatical difficulties that negatively influenced confidence during publication writing, particularly under pressure to publish in international journals (Laso & Comelles Pujadas). Comparable challenges were reported among research scholars in India, where language precision, coherence, and sustained focus were perceived as major obstacles to effective academic writing (Harshalatha & Sreenivasulu). Doctoral students in EMI universities faced compounded difficulties related to language, genre expectations, and journal conventions, which were further intensified by limited supervisory and institutional support (Shamsi & Vanci Osam). Early-career researchers in Oman similarly experienced tension between institutional publication expectations and limited familiarity with English academic discourse, leading to reliance on adaptive strategies rather than confident authorship (Mehta & Tuzlukova). Across these contexts, academic writing competence appears closely tied to access to structured guidance, disciplinary enculturation, and sustained pedagogical support, underscoring the role of systemic factors in shaping writing-related demotivation.

## Theme 2: Lack of Confidence

This theme responds to research question 2: How does academic writing influence academicians' confidence and sense of belonging within academic communities? This theme focuses on psychological, motivational, and identity-related dimensions of academic writing, including confidence, productivity, socialization, and sense of belonging.



Table 5- Articles for theme 2

PS	Article Title
PS1	Thai novice researchers' self-efficacy, writing difficulties, and awareness of academic rigor
PS14	Research Self-Efficacy and Productivity of Select Faculty Members
PS17	Scholarly Publication During Doctoral Candidature: Obstacles, Benefits, and Strategies for Success
PS18	The Challenges of Writing: The 'Long and Winding Road' of Belonging to Academia

With reference to the articles in Table 5 above, research on demotivation in academic writing, within the theme of research self-efficacy and academic identity, consistently indicates that confidence in research-related tasks plays a crucial role in sustaining writing engagement.

Evidence from Thai undergraduate contexts shows that relatively strong confidence in technical research tasks, such as database searching and formulating research questions, does not necessarily extend to complex writing activities, particularly literature review synthesis and critical analysis (Han, Apridayani, & Sukarsih). This uneven self-efficacy profile contributes to writing hesitation and reduced academic rigor when confidence declines in higher-order writing demands. Similar patterns appear among faculty populations, where moderate levels of research self-efficacy coexist with low publication output, suggesting that perceived capability alone is insufficient without structural reinforcement (Pentang & Domingo). In doctoral education, expectations to publish during candidature further intensify the relationship between self-belief and writing persistence. Early exposure to publication practices may enhance long-term confidence; however, limited familiarity with scholarly conventions often produces anxiety and disengagement during early writing attempts (Jalongo). Across these studies, demotivation emerges not as a lack of awareness of academic standards but as a response to misalignment between perceived competence and the complexity of scholarly writing demands.

Beyond individual confidence, academic writing motivation is closely tied to identity formation and a sense of belonging within academic communities. Research focusing on multilingual and international scholars demonstrates that academic writing functions as a marker of legitimacy, where persistent perceptions of linguistic or rhetorical deficiency contribute to marginalization and withdrawal from writing practices (Benton & Marwah). Experiences of exclusion are reinforced by implicit gatekeeping norms and homogenized expectations of scholarly voice, which weaken identification with academic authorship. Doctoral and faculty writers facing limited mentorship, publication pressure, and unclear institutional expectations similarly report diminished motivation, as writing becomes associated with surveillance rather than scholarly contribution (Pentang & Domingo; Jalongo). Findings also suggest that academic socialization, peer collaboration, and sustained engagement in writing communities can counteract demotivation by strengthening authorial identity and normalizing struggle as part of scholarly development (Han et al.; Jalongo). Collectively, the literature indicates that demotivation in academic writing is embedded within an interaction of self-efficacy beliefs, identity negotiation, and perceived belonging, rather than solely within individual skill deficits.

### Theme 3: Ethical Issues

This theme corresponds to research question 3: What ethical issues do academicians encounter in academic writing practices within institutional and scholarly contexts? This theme is focused on aspects of ethical challenges, plagiarism, AI use, and integrity-related concerns in contemporary academic writing.

Table 6- Articles for theme 3

PS	Article Title
PS7	Character-based perceptions of plagiarism in scientific writing



PS11	Pedagogy professors' perspectives on the use of Artificial Intelligence in Academic work
PS15	Academic Evolution in the Age of ChatGPT

The abstracts in Table 6 above, which are within this theme, indicate that ethical concerns related to academic writing remain a significant source of tension and demotivation among academicians, particularly when expectations of integrity intersect with personal values and institutional norms. Research examining perceptions of plagiarism among Islamic Religious Education lecturers shows that understanding of ethical writing is uneven and strongly influenced by individual character formation, prior academic socialization, and the presence of institutional guidance (Firdaus, Kosasih, Syafei, Ramdani, & Rahardja). Variations in how plagiarism is interpreted and internalized suggest that ethical uncertainty can discourage confident academic writing, especially when authors fear unintentional misconduct. Similar concerns are echoed in studies addressing artificial intelligence in academic work, where questions of originality and authorship generate hesitation and reduced writing engagement (Nascimento, Fialho, & da Costa). Academicians acknowledge the potential of AI tools to support efficiency, yet uncertainty regarding ethical boundaries often results in cautious or limited use. Findings across these studies emphasize that insufficient training and ambiguous ethical frameworks contribute to anxiety around compliance, thereby affecting writing motivation and scholarly productivity (Firdaus et al.; Nascimento et al.).

The rapid emergence of generative artificial intelligence, particularly conversational language models, has further complicated ethical decision-making in academic writing. Qualitative evidence from higher education contexts demonstrates that tools such as ChatGPT are perceived as both enabling and disruptive, offering support for idea generation and drafting while simultaneously raising concerns about dependency, academic honesty, and erosion of critical thinking (Isiaku, Kwala, Sambo, Ukaegbu, & Isaku). These tensions are reinforced when institutional policies lag behind technological adoption, leaving academicians without clear guidance on acceptable practices. Similar patterns are reported among pedagogy professors, who recognize the pedagogical value of AI but express concern about its impact on students' authorship development and ethical awareness (Nascimento et al.). Across the reviewed abstracts, ethical apprehension appears to function as a moderating factor in technology adoption, with demotivation emerging when responsibility for ethical judgment is placed primarily on individual writers rather than supported by institutional regulation (Isiaku et al.; Firdaus et al.). Collectively, the literature suggests that demotivation in academic writing is not driven by technology itself, but by unresolved ethical ambiguity and limited institutional preparedness to guide responsible and transparent use of emerging digital tools.

## Solutions

### Theme 4: Pedagogical & Institutional Support

This theme answers research question 4: How do pedagogical and institutional support mechanisms address academicians' challenges in academic writing within higher education institutions? This final theme focuses on instructional models, academic literacies, writing communities, and institutional strategies are designed to support academic writing and publication.

Table 7- Articles for theme 4

PS	Article Title
PS4	Enhancing academic writing confidence and productivity: The impact of TUS WEWRITE!
PS5	Academic Skills Competence and Challenges in International Academic Publishing
PS12	Brainstorming the context–text dialectic: epistemic reflections from early-career researchers
PS19	Teaching Academic Literacies in international relations: towards a pedagogy of practice



The abstracts reviewed under this theme consistently indicate that pedagogical and institutional support play a decisive role in shaping academic writing motivation and productivity, particularly in contexts where scholars experience isolation or limited guidance. A recurring finding is that structured writing initiatives and pedagogically informed interventions can reduce feelings of alienation and uncertainty that often hinder sustained writing engagement. For example, the implementation of a virtual writing community demonstrated positive effects on writing confidence and productivity by addressing emotional barriers such as imposter syndrome and procrastination, while also fostering peer interaction and accountability (Stritch). Similarly, pedagogical approaches grounded in Academic Literacies emphasize writing as a socially situated practice rather than a purely technical skill. Long-term integration of formative feedback, peer assessment, and reflective activities was shown to support students' gradual engagement with disciplinary discourse and academic conventions, thereby strengthening writing development over time (Olsson, Gelot, Schaffer, & Litsegård). In parallel, early-career researchers benefitted from structured analytical frameworks that guided literature engagement, enabling more systematic interpretation and synthesis of complex texts (Elshater & Abusaada). Across these studies, pedagogical support emerges as most effective when writing instruction is embedded within disciplinary contexts and sustained through collaborative practices.

Institutional conditions further shape the effectiveness of pedagogical efforts and significantly influence writing-related demotivation. Faculty members working in non-English-speaking higher education environments reported that limited access to writing centers, mentoring structures, and clear publication policies intensified difficulties associated with academic publishing, despite strong personal motivation (Almawi, Sayaf, & Fazel). Structural inequities, including insufficient research funding and restricted access to international publishing platforms, were found to amplify linguistic challenges and contribute to perceptions of marginalization. Conversely, evidence-based institutional strategies such as English for Research Publication Purposes programmes, peer-review training, and aligned incentive systems were identified as mechanisms that could mitigate demotivation by reinforcing writing competence and scholarly agency (Almawi et al.). Institutional cultures that value collaboration and provide explicit guidance on academic writing expectations appear to support both early-career researchers and students in negotiating disciplinary norms more confidently (Elshater & Abusaada; Olsson et al.). Overall, the literature suggests that demotivation in academic writing is closely linked to the absence of coherent pedagogical frameworks and institutional infrastructures, while sustained, context-sensitive support can foster more resilient and engaged academic writers.

## CONCLUSION

### Summary Of Findings

This systematic literature review was conducted to synthesize recent empirical evidence on *academic writing among academicians*, with particular attention to the challenges encountered and the solutions proposed within higher education contexts. The review focused on peer-reviewed journal articles published between 2024 and 2026, retrieved from Scopus and Web of Science, and selected through explicit inclusion, screening, and quality appraisal criteria. Guided by four PICO-based research questions, the review examined cognitive and linguistic challenges, confidence and sense of belonging, ethical issues, and pedagogical as well as institutional support mechanisms related to academic writing. By consolidating findings from 18 high-quality studies, the review aimed to address fragmentation in existing research and provide a coherent understanding of how academic writing difficulties persist across academic stages and contexts. Overall, the review highlights that academic writing is not merely a technical skill but a complex, socially situated practice shaped by individual capabilities, institutional expectations, and evolving ethical landscapes, thereby underscoring the broader significance of examining writing challenges and solutions in an integrated manner.

The synthesis of findings revealed several consistent patterns across the reviewed literature. First, cognitive and linguistic challenges remain the most frequently reported obstacles, particularly in EFL and EMI contexts, where difficulties extend beyond surface-level language accuracy to include critical thinking, genre awareness, synthesis of sources, and rhetorical control. Second, issues of confidence, self-efficacy, and sense of belonging strongly influence writing engagement and persistence, suggesting that academic writing functions as an identity-forming practice closely tied to academic socialization. Third, ethical concerns, including plagiarism awareness and responsible use of artificial intelligence, have emerged as a significant and growing area of tension, often contributing to hesitation and demotivation when institutional guidance is unclear. In response to

these challenges, the literature consistently emphasizes the importance of pedagogical and institutional support, such as academic literacies approaches, writing communities, mentoring systems, and structured publication support programmes. Collectively, these themes advance understanding by integrating cognitive, affective, ethical, and structural dimensions of academic writing, offering a more holistic perspective than studies that focus solely on linguistic deficits or individual responsibility.

### Significance of Review

This review contributes to the field by synthesizing diverse strands of research into a unified thematic framework that distinguishes between challenges and solutions while highlighting their interdependence. The findings support a shift away from deficit-oriented views of academic writing toward capacity-building and context-sensitive approaches that recognize writing as a developmental process. Practical implications include the need for higher education institutions to invest in sustained pedagogical interventions, clear ethical guidelines, and inclusive writing cultures that promote collaboration and scholarly identity formation. Despite these contributions, the review is subject to limitations related to database selection, English-language restrictions, and a defined publication timeframe, which may have excluded relevant studies from other contexts or earlier periods. Future research is encouraged to adopt longitudinal designs, explore underrepresented disciplines, and examine the long-term impact of institutional writing initiatives and ethical frameworks, particularly in relation to emerging technologies. In conclusion, systematic literature reviews play a vital role in consolidating evidence, revealing research gaps, and guiding informed decision-making, thereby supporting the advancement of theory, practice, and policy in the field of academic writing among academicians.

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### Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest to report regarding the present study.

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