

From Anxiety to Engagement: A Systematic Literature Review of Writing Motivation and Emerging Institutional Innovations in Second-Language Writing

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ABSTRACT

Writing in a second language (L2) is shaped not only by linguistic competence but also by learners' anxiety, motivation, self-efficacy, and the learning environments in which writing occurs. This systematic literature review (SLR) examines the relationship between writing anxiety, writing motivation, and emerging institutional and instructional innovations in second-language writing to identify how these dimensions contribute to learners' engagement and writing development. Guided by Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis, Self-Determination Theory, and the Community of Inquiry framework, the review employed a PRISMA-informed methodology using Scopus and Web of Science. The search identified 320 records, from which 60 articles were retained following screening and eligibility procedures, while 30 primary studies underwent detailed quality appraisal. The synthesis identified three principal themes: writing anxiety, writing motivation, and emerging institutional innovations. Writing anxiety was the most prominent theme, with evidence linking anxiety to self-efficacy, writing attitudes, perfectionism, and affective experiences. Peer and teacher support, corrective feedback, and formative assessment emerged as important mechanisms for mitigating anxiety. Writing motivation was associated with goal orientation, task value, learner engagement, self-regulated learning, and metacognitive strategies. Emerging innovations including artificial intelligence, virtual learning, flipped classrooms, English for Academic Purposes, Task-Based Language Teaching, and outdoor learning demonstrated potential to support writing development and influence affective outcomes. However, the literature remains fragmented, with the three dimensions predominantly investigated independently. The review highlights the need for integrated and longitudinal research examining how institutional innovations mediate anxiety, motivation, self-efficacy, and engagement to improve actual L2 writing outcomes.

Keywords: Second-language writing; Writing anxiety; Writing motivation; Institutional innovations; Learner engagement

INTRODUCTION

Background of the study

Second-language (L2) writing is an important but challenging aspect of language learning, particularly

because students must manage linguistic demands while also maintaining confidence, motivation, and engagement. The document highlights writing anxiety as an important affective factor that can arise from fear of negative evaluation, limited linguistic proficiency, grammatical difficulties, time pressure, and previous negative writing experiences. High anxiety may restrict students' willingness and ability to engage

effectively in writing tasks, whereas self-confidence and supportive learning environments can encourage participation. At the same time, writing motivation is closely associated with goal orientation, task value, self-regulated learning, metacognition, and learner engagement. The review also identifies emerging institutional and instructional innovations including artificial intelligence (AI), virtual learning, flipped classrooms, English for Academic Purposes (EAP), Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), and outdoor learning as increasingly important contexts for improving L2 writing experiences.

Statement of Problem

Despite growing research in these areas, the main problem is that writing anxiety, motivation, and institutional innovations have often been examined as separate issues. Existing studies have investigated anxiety and self-efficacy, motivational strategies, feedback, and innovative learning environments, but there remains limited understanding of how these dimensions interact to influence students' writing development and engagement. The review indicates that anxiety, self-efficacy, motivation, and other affective factors frequently interact, while metacognitive and self-regulated strategies are associated with lower anxiety and stronger writing development.

Research Gap

The research gap, therefore, lies in the limited integration of these three dimensions within a single framework. In particular, insufficient research has examined how institutional innovations simultaneously influence writing anxiety and motivation and how these relationships affect actual L2 writing outcomes. This gap supports the need for a systematic review that moves conceptually “from anxiety to engagement” by synthesising evidence on motivation and emerging institutional innovations in second-language writing.

Research Questions

Research questions are important to a systematic literature review (SLR). The questions provide the foundation and direction for the entire review process. A well-defined research question ensures that the literature search is exhaustive and systematic, covering all relevant studies that address key aspects of the topic (Kitchenham, 2007). The research questions in this SLR are formulated based on the PICO framework. This framework is a mnemonic style used to formulate research questions, particularly in qualitative research, proposed by Lockwood et al. (2015). PICO stands for Population, Interest, and Context. This SLR is done to answer the four research questions below;

RQ1

What are the major factors associated with writing anxiety among second-language (L2/EFL/ESL) learners, and how does writing anxiety influence their writing performance and learning experiences?

RQ2

What factors influence writing motivation among second-language (L2/EFL/ESL) learners, particularly in relation to goal orientation, self-efficacy, learner engagement, and self-regulated learning?

RQ3

What emerging institutional and instructional innovations such as artificial intelligence, virtual learning, flipped classrooms, EAP, TBLT, and outdoor learning have been investigated to address writing anxiety, enhance writing motivation, or improve L2 writing outcomes?

RQ4

How do writing anxiety, writing motivation, and emerging institutional innovations interact in shaping the development and outcomes of second-language writing, and what gaps remain in the existing literature?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

Affective Theory

Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis, introduced as part of his Second Language Acquisition theory in 1982, provides a useful theoretical foundation for understanding writing anxiety among university students. The theory suggests that affective factors, such as anxiety, motivation, and self-confidence, can influence the extent to which language learners are able to acquire and use a second language effectively. When students experience high levels of anxiety, their affective filter may become elevated, which can prevent them from fully processing and acquiring language input. In the context of academic writing, university students who feel anxious about grammar, vocabulary, sentence structure, or negative evaluation may experience difficulty expressing their ideas clearly and confidently. Writing anxiety can therefore act as an emotional barrier that interferes with students' ability to focus on the writing task and make effective use of their language knowledge. Conversely, students with lower anxiety and greater self-confidence are more likely to engage actively in writing and respond positively to feedback. Thus, Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis supports the view that emotional factors, particularly anxiety, play an important role in shaping university students' writing experiences and performance.

Self-Determination Theory

Self-Determination Theory (SDT), developed by Deci and Ryan (1985), provides a useful theoretical foundation for understanding writing motivation among university students. The theory explains that individuals are more likely to become motivated and actively engage in activities when their psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are satisfied. In the context of academic writing, autonomy refers to students' sense of control and choice over their writing topics, ideas, and approaches. When students feel that they have freedom to make decisions about their writing, they are more likely to develop intrinsic motivation and engage more willingly in writing tasks. Competence refers to students' belief that they are capable of completing writing tasks successfully. Positive feedback, opportunities to improve, and appropriate guidance can strengthen students' confidence in their writing abilities and encourage greater effort. Relatedness involves students' sense of connection and support from lecturers and peers, which can create a positive learning environment. Therefore, SDT suggests that when university students' needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are supported, they are more likely to develop stronger writing motivation, participate actively in writing activities, and persist in improving their academic writing skills.

Community of Inquiry (CoI)

The Community of Inquiry (CoI) framework developed by Garrison, Anderson, and Archer (2000) provides a useful theoretical foundation for understanding emerging institutional innovations in higher education. The framework proposes that meaningful learning occurs through the interaction of three interdependent elements: teaching presence, social presence, and cognitive presence. Teaching presence refers to the design, facilitation, and direction of learning activities by educators and institutions, while social presence involves students' ability to communicate, collaborate, and develop a sense of belonging within the learning community. Cognitive presence focuses on students' ability to construct and confirm meaning through reflection, discussion, and critical inquiry. In relation to emerging institutional innovations, such as digital learning platforms, blended learning, collaborative technologies, and innovative teaching practices, the CoI framework highlights the importance of creating learning environments that promote interaction, engagement, and knowledge construction. Institutional innovations can strengthen teaching presence by providing new technological and pedagogical approaches, while social and cognitive presence can be enhanced through collaborative and interactive learning opportunities. Therefore, the CoI framework supports the view that successful institutional innovation depends not only on adopting new technologies but also on creating meaningful, collaborative, and learner-centred educational experiences.

Conceptual Framework

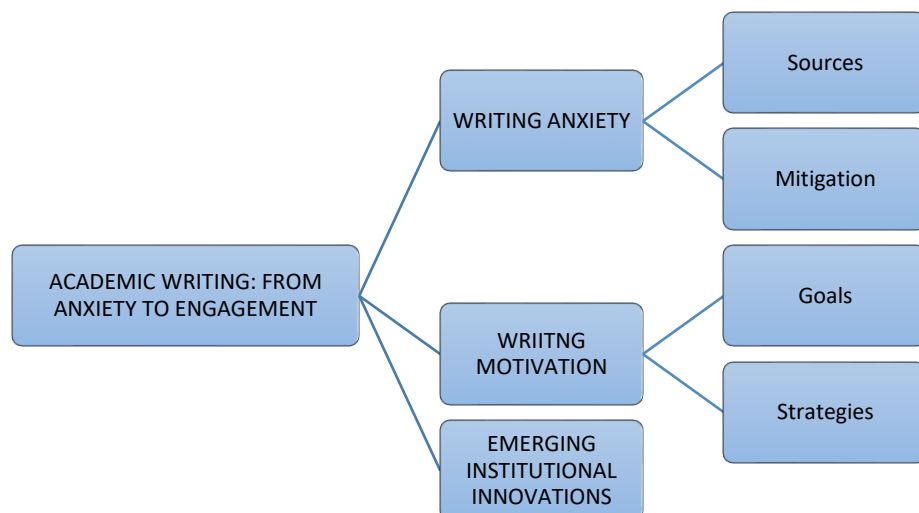


Figure 1- Conceptual Framework of the Study

The conceptual framework for the study is presented in Figure 1. The framework integrates three complementary theories to explain how affective, motivational, and institutional factors shape students' engagement in second-language academic writing. First, Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis provides the theoretical foundation for writing anxiety, particularly its sources and mitigation. Writing anxiety may arise from fear of negative evaluation, limited linguistic proficiency, grammatical difficulties, time pressure, and previous negative writing experiences. When anxiety is high, the affective filter may restrict students' willingness and ability to engage with writing tasks. Therefore, mitigation strategies such as supportive feedback, scaffolding, collaborative learning, and a low-threat writing environment may reduce anxiety and facilitate greater participation in academic writing.

Second, Self-Determination Theory (SDT) by Deci and Ryan (1985) underpins writing motivation, focusing on students' writing goals and strategies. The theory proposes that autonomy, competence, and relatedness influence students' motivation and persistence. In second-language writing, meaningful goals, opportunities for choice, confidence-building activities, peer support, and effective writing strategies can strengthen students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Third, the Community of Inquiry (CoI) framework by Garrison et al. (2000) supports the dimension of emerging institutional innovations. Through teaching, social, and cognitive presence, innovations such as artificial intelligence (AI), virtual learning, English for Academic Purposes (EAP), Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), and outdoor learning can create interactive and learner-centred writing environments. Collectively, the three theories conceptualise a progression from anxiety and motivational barriers towards engagement, while recognising institutional innovation as an important contextual support for improving second-language writing experiences.

Material And Methods

For this systematic literature review (SLR), the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) framework was adopted to ensure transparency, completeness, and consistency throughout the review process. As outlined by Page et al. (2021), PRISMA provides a structured approach for systematically identifying, screening, assessing, and selecting relevant studies. In the present study, the researchers worked collaboratively to examine and analyse publications that were relevant to the research topic and research questions. To ensure comprehensive and reliable coverage of the literature, two major bibliographic databases, Web of Science (WoS) and Scopus, were selected as the primary sources for the

literature search. These databases were chosen because of their extensive coverage of scholarly publications and their established role in supporting systematic and rigorous literature reviews.

The PRISMA framework provides a structured and systematic process for conducting literature reviews through several key stages, namely (i) identification, (ii) screening, (iii) eligibility, (iv) data abstraction and analysis, and (v) quality appraisal. During the identification stage, relevant studies are systematically retrieved from selected databases using predefined search strategies. The screening stage involves reviewing the identified records and removing studies that do not meet the established criteria. In the eligibility stage, the remaining publications are assessed in detail to determine whether they satisfy the inclusion requirements of the review. Subsequently, data abstraction and analysis involve extracting, organizing, and synthesizing relevant information from the selected studies to identify meaningful patterns and themes. Finally, the quality appraisal stage evaluates the methodological quality and relevance of the included studies. Together, these stages provide a systematic and transparent procedure for selecting, analysing, and evaluating evidence, thereby strengthening the rigour and reliability of the findings generated from the review.

Identification

In accordance with the PRISMA framework, the identification stage serves as the initial step of the systematic literature review process and aims to ensure comprehensive retrieval of relevant studies while minimizing potential selection bias. In the present study, a systematic and comprehensive literature search was conducted using two major bibliographic databases, Scopus and Web of Science (WoS). The search strategy employed the keywords “academic writing,” “writing motivation,” “anxiety” and “students” to identify publications relevant to the scope of the review. The complete search string and database-specific search strategies are presented in Table 1.

These databases were deliberately selected because of their extensive multidisciplinary coverage, stringent indexing criteria, and strong representation of high-quality, peer-reviewed journals. The search process resulted in the retrieval of 220 records from Scopus and 100 records from Web of Science, yielding a combined total of 320 records prior to the removal of duplicates.

The higher number of results obtained from Scopus can be attributed to its broader inclusion of journals and stronger coverage in the social sciences, whereas WoS contributed a more targeted collection of highly cited and methodologically rigorous studies. As shown in Table 1, the identification of 320 records reflects the growing academic interest in writing within higher education and highlights the conceptual diversity of research spanning linguistic, pedagogical, and psychological perspectives. Employing multiple databases enhances the methodological robustness of the review by minimizing database-specific bias and increasing the likelihood of capturing diverse research traditions and geographical contexts.

Additionally, the use of carefully designed search terms ensured sensitivity to terminological variation while maintaining alignment with the review’s objectives. Overall, this transparent and systematic identification process establishes a strong foundation for subsequent screening and eligibility stages, consistent with PRISMA standards and expectations for rigorous, replicable research.

TABLE 1 :The search string.

Scopus	TITLE-ABS-KEY ((writing OR "written expression" OR "writing skills" OR "writing process") AND (motivation OR "intrinsic motivation" OR "extrinsic motivation" OR "academic motivation") AND (anxiety OR "writing anxiety" OR "test anxiety" OR "performance anxiety") AND (students OR "student population" OR "learners" OR "pupils"))
Web of Science	TITLE-ABS-KEY ((writing OR "written expression" OR "writing skills" OR "writing process") AND (motivation OR "intrinsic motivation" OR "extrinsic motivation" OR "academic motivation") AND (anxiety OR "writing anxiety" OR "test anxiety" OR "performance anxiety") AND (students OR "student population" OR "learners" OR

"pupils"))

Extracted Aug 2026

Screening

During the screening stage of the systematic literature review, the identified publications were systematically assessed to determine their relevance to the four established research questions. This stage involved refining the initial pool of records by applying predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria and removing duplicate publications. Following the initial screening process, 320 records were excluded because they did not satisfy the scope and relevance requirements of the study, resulting in 61 articles for further consideration, comprising 22 records from Scopus and 39 from Web of Science, as illustrated in Figure 2. The screening process primarily focused on the type and relevance of the literature. Publications such as book reviews, book series, meta-syntheses, meta-analyses, conference proceedings, and book chapters that were not directly related to the focus of the review were excluded. To maintain consistency and ensure the relevance of the evidence base, the review retained only peer-reviewed articles published in English between 2022 and 2026. A subsequent duplication check identified and removed one (1) duplicate record across the two databases. Overall, this systematic screening procedure helped narrow the literature to studies that were most closely aligned with the research objectives and suitable for the subsequent stages of the review.

Eligibility

For the third step, known as eligibility, a total of 60 articles have been prepared. 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. Therefore, two reports were omitted because they were not pure science articles based on empirical evidence. Finally, 60 articles are available for review (see Table 3).

TABLE 2 :The selection criterion is searching

Criterion	Inclusion	Exclusion
Language	English	Non-English
Time line	2021 – 2026	< 2021
Literature type	Journal (Article)	Conference, Book, Review
Publication Stage	Final	In Press
Subject Area	Writing Motivation, Anxiety,Students	Writing Motivation, Anxiety,Students

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 60 publications for relevant material related to the study's topics. They examined the methodology and research results of significant studies on PIU and mental health in children. 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. This expert review phase established the validity of each subtheme by ensuring clarity, importance, and suitability (Refer to Appendix 1).

Quality of Appraisal

According to Kitchenham and Charters (Kitchenham, 2007), the researchers need to assess the quality of the research chosen. The next stage is applying the quality assessment suggested by Abouzahra et al., (2020), which consists of six questions complying with a scoring procedure for evaluating each criterion. The possible ratings are ;

"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.

Table 3: Possible ratings for 6 question by Abouzahra et al., (2020),

No	Question
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?

Each writer independently assesses the study according to these criteria, and the scores are then totalled 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. Each reviewer read the papers chosen at the last stage, and evaluates the paper based on the ratings by Abouzahra,e.al. (2020). The three experts then met to finalise a common rating for each of the 30 documents. This threshold ensures that only studies meeting a certain quality standard proceed further. The results are shown in Table 4.

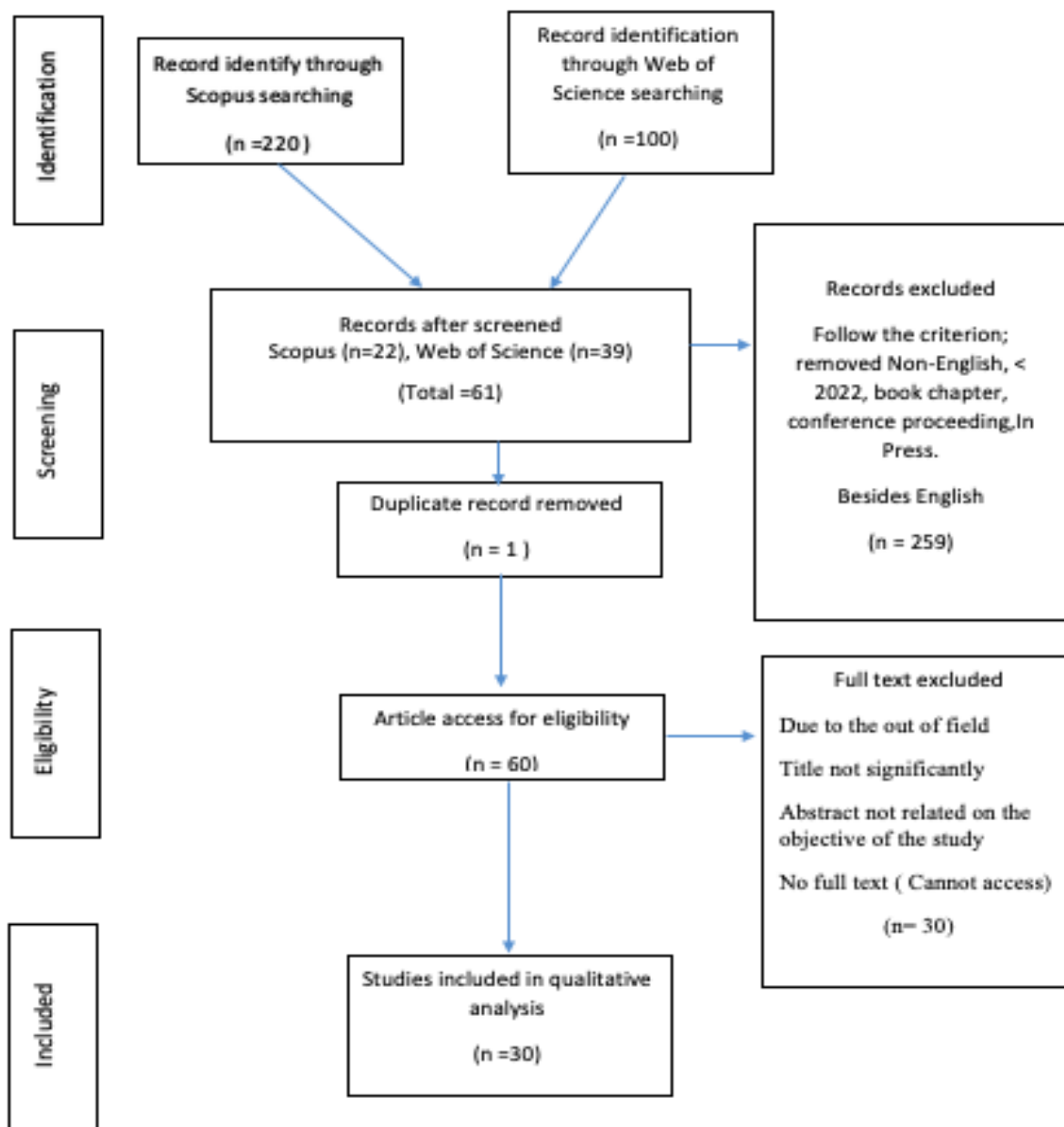


FIGURE 2. Flow diagram of the proposed searching study (Moher D, Liberati A, Tetzlaff J, 2009)

RESULT AND FINDING

Quality of Assessment

Table 4: shows the result of the assessment performance for the final 30 selected primary studies. The overall quality of the articles is as follows;

- High quality ($\geq 80\%$): Majority of studies
- Moderate quality (60–79%): Conceptual or descriptive studies
- Lower quality ($< 60\%$): Primarily survey-only or exploratory abstracts

PS	Author	Title of Document	QA1	QA2	QA3	QA4	QA5	QA6	Total Mark	Percentage (%)
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PS1	Younas, M.; El-Dakhs, D.; Anwar, B.; Jinag, Y.	Motivational role of teachers in developing English speaking skills of Pakistani university students	Y	Y	Y	Y	P	N	4.5	75.0
PS2	Weng, F.; Ye, S. X.; Xue, W.	The Effects of Peer Feedback on L2 Students' Writing Motivation: An Experimental Study in China	Y	Y	Y	P	Y	N	4.5	75.0
PS3	Sheokarah, J.	#PicnicWriting! How springboard activities and outdoor inspiration enhance process writing skills of second language learners	Y	Y	Y	Y	P	N	4.5	75.0
PS4	Derakhshan, A.; Liu, A. J.	Mapping the synergistic interaction of L2 learners' writing self-efficacy and writing performance: The serial mediating effects of writing anxiety and motivation	Y	Y	Y	Y	P	N	4.5	75.0
PS5	Khafaga, A.; Al-Johani, H. M.	The Impact of Virtual Learning on Students' Engagement in the Saudi EFL Context: A Connectivism-Theoretic Perspective	Y	Y	Y	Y	P	N	4.5	75.0
PS6	Zarrinabadi, N.; Mamoudi-Gahrouei, V.; Mohammadzadeh Mohammadabadi, A.	Your writing could have been better: Examining the effects of upward and downward	Y	Y	Y	P	Y	N	4.5	75.0

		counterfactual communication on the motivational aspects of L2 writing								
PS7	Sukjairungwattana, P.; Xu, W.; Dong, D.; Li, F.	The influence of learning anxiety and involution on motivation among undergraduate English majors in Beijing and Macau	Y	Y	P	P	Y	N	4.0	66.7
PS8	Shurovi, M.	Investigating the role of EFL learners' goal orientation, task value and writing anxiety in learning strategies: A structural equation modeling approach	Y	Y	Y	Y	P	Y	5.5	91.7
PS9	Abdel Latif, M. M. M.; Alghizzi, T. M.; Alshahrani, T. M.	Gender-Related Differences and the Role of Motivation Beliefs in EFL Writing Performance: The Case of Saudi University Students	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	5.0	83.3
PS10	Sun, J.; Motevalli, S.; Chan, N. N.; Khodi, A.	Implementation of Self-regulated Learning Writing Module: Amplifying Motivation and Mitigating Anxiety among EFL Learners	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	P	5.5	91.7
PS11	Bal, M.; Uyumaz, G.; Maden, B.	Examining the mediating role of metacognitive	Y	Y	Y	P	Y	N	4.5	75.0

		writing strategies in the relationship between self-regulated writing skills and writing anxiety among middle school students								
PS12	Sun, J.; Motevalli, S.; Chan, N. N.	Exploring Writing Anxiety during Writing Process: An Analysis of Perceptions in Chinese English as a (EFL) Learners	Y	Y	Y	P	Y	N	4.5	75.0
PS13	Zhu, S. D.; Wang, C.	Effects of corrective feedback on writing motivation and anxiety: A structural equation model of adult CSL learners in Vietnam	Y	Y	Y	P	Y	N	4.5	75.0
PS14	Ozfidan, B.; El-Dakhs, D. A. S.; Ibrahim, N. G.	The Role of Motivation and Anxiety in Writing Strategy Use: Focus on Saudi EFL Learners	Y	Y	Y	P	Y	N	4.5	75.0
PS15	Shen, X. L.; Tao, Y. H.	Metacognitive Strategies, AI-based Writing Self-efficacy and Writing Anxiety in AI-assisted Writing Contexts: A Structural Equation Modeling Analysis	Y	Y	Y	Y	P	N	4.5	75.0
PS16	Abdolrezapour, P.; Ghanbari, N.	The impact of an emotional literacy intervention on	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	5.0	83.3

		students' composing processes in EFL integrated writing tasks								
PS17	Wang, Y.	Can formative assessment reduce second-language writing anxiety?	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	P	5.5	91.7
PS18	Shurovi, M.	Investigating the role of EFL learners' goal orientation, task value and writing anxiety in learning strategies: A structural equation modeling approach	Y	Y	Y	Y	P	Y	5.5	91.7
PS19	Ismeti, E.; Ismeti, E.	Formative Feedback, Writing Self-Efficacy, and Perceived Writing Competence Among EFL University Students in Kosovo: An Associative Cross-Sectional Study	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	6.0	100.0
PS20	Shen, X. L.; Ismail, L.; Jeyaraj, J. J.; Teng, M. F.	Metacognitive strategies, writing self-efficacy and writing anxiety in different learning modes: A two-wave longitudinal model	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	5.0	83.3
PS21	Ghane, M. H.; Razmi, M. H.; Dehghanpoor, F.; Nematollahi, R.	The impact of written corrective feedback on students' writing performance,	Y	Y	Y	P	Y	N	4.5	75.0

		self-efficacy, and anxiety								
PS22	Aydin, E.; Yüce, E.	Investigation of Middle School Students' Writing Anxieties, Writing Attitudes, and Writing Self-Efficacy: A Mediation Model	Y	Y	Y	P	Y	N	4.5	75.0
PS23	Quvanch, Z.; Na, K. S.	Evaluating Afghanistan University students' writing anxiety in English class: An empirical research	Y	Y	Y	Y	P	N	4.5	75.0
PS24	Yang, M.	Fostering EFL university students' motivation and self-regulated learning in writing: A socio-constructivist approach	Y	Y	Y	Y	P	N	4.5	75.0
PS25	Khoso, A. K.; Darazi, M. A.; Mahesar, K. A.; Memon, M. A.; Nawaz, F.	The Impact of ESL Teachers' Emotional Intelligence on ESL Students' Academic Engagement, Reading and Writing Proficiency: Mediating role of ESL Students' Motivation	Y	Y	Y	P	Y	Y	5.5	91.7
PS26	Gou, R.; Yang, X.; Chen, X. H.; Wang, H. X.	Chain mediating role of English writing anxiety and English writing self-efficacy between teacher support, peer	Y	Y	P	P	Y	N	4.0	66.7

		support, and English writing engagement among middle school students in China								
PS27	Sun, Q. Y.; Yang, Z. Y.; Jiang, L. J.	Effect of an EAP Course on Students' Writing Performance, Anxiety and Self-Efficacy: A Latent Profile Analysis	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	P	5.5	91.7
PS28	Khosravi, R.; Dastgoshadeh, A.; Jalilzadeh, K.	Writing metacognitive strategy-based instruction through flipped classroom: an investigation of writing performance, anxiety, and self-efficacy	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	5.0	83.3
PS29	Khosravi, R.; Mohammadi, E.; Esmaeili, N.; Zandi, H.	Perfectionism and writing anxiety as predictors of Iranian EFL learners' performance in IELTS writing module: a multi-dimensional perspective	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	5.0	83.3
PS30	Tabari, M. A.; Goetze, J.	Exploring the impacts of task complexity, anxiety, and self-efficacy on L2 written production: Unraveling individual differences in TBLT	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	5.0	83.3

The 30 records have an overall average score of approximately 5.0/6, equivalent to about 83.3%. Overall, the selected studies demonstrate a good to very good level of methodological and reporting quality. The quality assessment table indicates that the 30 selected studies generally demonstrate a good level of quality, with scores ranging from 4.0 (66.7%) to 6.0 (100%). Most studies received a “Yes” (Y) rating for QA1,

QA2, and QA3, indicating that their research purposes, significance or usefulness, and methodologies were clearly presented. QA4 also received predominantly positive ratings, although several studies were rated Partly (P) because the concepts or theoretical approaches were not fully defined in the available information. QA5 was generally strong, particularly where studies included comparison groups, statistical relationships, or explicit comparisons with previous research; however, some studies received a partial score. QA6 was the weakest criterion, as most studies did not explicitly report their limitations in the available article information. The highest-rated studies were PS19 (Ismeti & Ismeti), with 6.0 (100%), followed by PS8/PS18, PS10, PS17, PS25, and PS27, which each scored 5.5 (91.7%). The lowest scores were recorded for PS7 and PS26, both obtaining 4.0 (66.7%). Overall, the table suggests that the selected literature is of generally good quality, but clearer reporting of limitations would strengthen the evidence base.

Answering Research Questions

Writing Anxiety

This section answers research question 1: What are the major factors associated with writing anxiety among second-language (L2/EFL/ESL) learners, and how does writing anxiety influence their writing performance and learning experiences? In the context of this SLR, this is divided into (a) sources and (b) mitigation.

Sources

PS	Author	Title of Document	Main focus
PS4	Derakhshan & Liu	Mapping the synergistic interaction of L2 learners' writing self-efficacy and writing performance: The serial mediating effects of writing anxiety and motivation	Self-efficacy, anxiety, motivation and writing performance
PS7	Sukjairungwattana et al.	The influence of learning anxiety and involution on motivation among undergraduate English majors in Beijing and Macau	Anxiety and motivation
PS9	Abdel Latif et al.	Gender-Related Differences and the Role of Motivation Beliefs in EFL Writing Performance: The Case of Saudi University Students	Motivation beliefs, self-efficacy, anxiety and writing performance
PS12	Sun et al.	Exploring Writing Anxiety during Writing Process: An Analysis of Perceptions in Chinese English as a (EFL) Learners	Sources and experiences of writing anxiety
PS15	Shen & Tao	Metacognitive Strategies, AI-based Writing Self-efficacy and Writing Anxiety in AI-assisted Writing Contexts: A Structural Equation Modeling Analysis	AI-based self-efficacy and writing anxiety
PS19	Ismeti & Ismeti	Formative Feedback, Writing Self-Efficacy, and Perceived Writing Competence Among EFL University Students in Kosovo: An Associative Cross-Sectional Study	Self-efficacy and perceived competence
PS20	Shen et al.	Metacognitive strategies, writing self-efficacy and writing anxiety in different learning modes: A two-wave longitudinal model	Self-efficacy, anxiety and metacognition
PS21	Ghane et al.	The impact of written corrective feedback on students' writing performance, self-efficacy, and anxiety	Self-efficacy and anxiety
PS22	Aydin & Yüce	Investigation of Middle School Students' Writing Anxieties, Writing Attitudes, and Writing Self-Efficacy: A Mediation Model	Anxiety, attitudes and self-efficacy

PS23	Quvanch & Na	Evaluating Afghanistan University students' writing anxiety in English class: An empirical research	Level, types and causes of anxiety
PS29	Khosravi et al.	Perfectionism and writing anxiety as predictors of Iranian EFL learners' performance in IELTS writing module: A multi-dimensional perspective	Perfectionism, anxiety and performance
PS30	Tabari & Goetze	Exploring the impacts of task complexity, anxiety, and self-efficacy on L2 written production: Unraveling individual differences in TBLT	Anxiety, self-efficacy and written production

This theme encompasses studies primarily concerned with the psychological and affective dimensions of writing, particularly writing anxiety, writing self-efficacy, writing attitudes, perfectionism, and emotional processes. This theme, demonstrates that affective variables are central to the current EFL/L2 writing literature. Across the studies, writing anxiety is generally associated with poorer writing experiences or performance, whereas self-efficacy and positive writing attitudes tend to support writing development. The studies also show that affective variables do not operate independently; anxiety, self-efficacy, motivation, attitudes and other psychological factors frequently interact or mediate one another.

Mitigation

PS	Author	Title of Document	Main focus
PS2	Weng et al.	The Effects of Peer Feedback on L2 Students' Writing Motivation: An Experimental Study in China	Peer feedback and writing motivation
PS6	Zarrinabadi et al.	Your writing could have been better: Examining the effects of upward and downward counterfactual communication on the motivational aspects of L2 writing	Teacher comments/counterfactual feedback
PS13	Zhu & Wang	Effects of corrective feedback on writing motivation and anxiety: A structural equation model of adult CSL learners in Vietnam	Corrective feedback, motivation and anxiety
PS17	Wang	Can formative assessment reduce second-language writing anxiety?	Self-, peer and teacher assessment
PS19	Ismeti & Ismeti	Formative Feedback, Writing Self-Efficacy, and Perceived Writing Competence Among EFL University Students in Kosovo: An Associative Cross-Sectional Study	Formative feedback and self-efficacy
PS21	Ghane et al.	The impact of written corrective feedback on students' writing performance, self-efficacy, and anxiety	Written corrective feedback
PS26	Gou et al.	Chain mediating role of English writing anxiety and English writing self-efficacy between teacher support, peer support, and English writing engagement among middle school students in China	Teacher/peer support and engagement

This theme represents research examining teacher support, peer support, feedback, corrective feedback, formative assessment, and interpersonal interactions as mechanisms for improving writing-related outcomes. This theme highlights the importance of socially mediated support in L2 writing. The studies generally indicate that constructive feedback, teacher conferencing, peer assessment, corrective feedback, and supportive relationships can influence motivation, anxiety, self-efficacy and writing engagement. Gou et al. particularly demonstrate the interconnected nature of teacher support, peer support, anxiety, self-efficacy and

writing engagement, while Weng et al. provide experimental evidence concerning the motivational effects of peer feedback.

Theme 2: Motivation

This section answers research question 2: What factors influence writing motivation among second-language (L2/EFL/ESL) learners, particularly in relation to goal orientation, self-efficacy, learner engagement, and self-regulated learning? In the context of this SLR analysis, this refers to (a) goals and (b) strategies

Goals

PS	Author	Title of Document	Main focus
PS1	Younas et al.	Motivational role of teachers in developing English speaking skills of Pakistani university students	Teacher motivation and willingness to communicate
PS8	Shurovi	Investigating the role of EFL learners' goal orientation, task value and writing anxiety in learning strategies: A structural equation modeling approach	Goal orientation, task value and motivation
PS18	Shurovi	Investigating the role of EFL learners' goal orientation, task value and writing anxiety in learning strategies: A structural equation modeling approach	Goal orientation, task value and motivation
PS16	Abdolrezapour & Ghanbari	The impact of an emotional literacy intervention on students' composing processes in EFL integrated writing tasks	Emotional literacy and engagement
PS24	Yang	Fostering EFL university students' motivation and self-regulated learning in writing: A socio-constructivist approach	Motivation and learning development
PS25	Khoso et al.	The Impact of ESL Teachers' Emotional Intelligence on ESL Students' Academic Engagement, Reading and Writing Proficiency: Mediating role of ESL Students' Motivation	Teacher emotional intelligence, motivation and engagement
PS27	Sun et al.	Effect of an EAP Course on Students' Writing Performance, Anxiety and Self-Efficacy: A Latent Profile Analysis	Motivation/affective change through EAP

This theme focuses on motivation as a central mechanism underlying learners' participation, persistence, willingness to communicate, writing engagement, and learning behaviour. The studies in this theme demonstrate that motivation is closely connected with learners' engagement and writing development. Goal orientation, task value, teacher characteristics, emotional literacy and learning environments can influence learners' motivational states and their willingness to participate in language-learning activities. Shurovi, for example, found relationships among goal orientation, task value, writing anxiety and learning strategy use, while Yang reported positive changes in motivation through collaborative and socially oriented writing activities.

Strategies

PS	Author	Title of Document	Main focus
PS10	Sun et al.	Implementation of Self-regulated Learning Writing Module: Amplifying Motivation and Mitigating Anxiety among EFL Learners	SRL intervention

PS11	Bal et al.	Examining the mediating role of metacognitive writing strategies in the relationship between self-regulated writing skills and writing anxiety among middle school students	Metacognitive strategies and anxiety
PS14	Ozfidan et al.	The Role of Motivation and Anxiety in Writing Strategy Use: Focus on Saudi EFL Learners	Writing strategy use
PS15	Shen & Tao	Metacognitive Strategies, AI-based Writing Self-efficacy and Writing Anxiety in AI-assisted Writing Contexts: A Structural Equation Modeling Analysis	Metacognition and AI-assisted writing
PS20	Shen et al.	Metacognitive strategies, writing self-efficacy and writing anxiety in different learning modes: A two-wave longitudinal model	Metacognition and self-efficacy
PS24	Yang	Fostering EFL university students' motivation and self-regulated learning in writing: A socio-constructivist approach	Self-regulated learning
PS28	Khosravi et al.	Writing metacognitive strategy-based instruction through flipped classroom: an investigation of writing performance, anxiety, and self-efficacy	Metacognitive instruction

This theme focuses on self-regulated learning (SRL), metacognitive strategies, planning, monitoring, evaluation, and learners' strategic control of the writing process. The studies suggest that effective writing development involves learners becoming increasingly capable of planning, monitoring, evaluating, and regulating their own writing processes. Metacognitive and self-regulated strategies are repeatedly associated with lower anxiety, stronger self-efficacy, improved writing performance and more effective learning behaviour. The intervention studies provide particularly useful evidence because they demonstrate that strategic writing instruction can produce changes in learners' writing-related outcomes.

Theme 3: Emerging Institutional Innovations

This section answers research question 3: What emerging institutional and instructional innovations such as artificial intelligence, virtual learning, flipped classrooms, EAP, TBLT, and outdoor learning have been investigated to address writing anxiety, enhance writing motivation, or improve L2 writing outcomes?

RQ4

How do writing anxiety, writing motivation, and emerging institutional innovations interact in shaping the development and outcomes of second-language writing, and what gaps remain in the existing literature?

PS	Author	Title of Document	Main focus
PS3	Sheokarah	#PicnicWriting! How springboard activities and outdoor inspiration enhance process writing skills of second language learners	Outdoor and experiential writing
PS5	Khafaga & Al-Johani	The Impact of Virtual Learning on Students' Engagement in the Saudi EFL Context: A Connectivism-Theoretic Perspective	Virtual learning and engagement
PS15	Shen & Tao	Metacognitive Strategies, AI-based Writing Self-efficacy and Writing Anxiety in AI-assisted Writing Contexts: A Structural Equation Modeling Analysis	AI-assisted writing
PS27	Sun et al.	Effect of an EAP Course on Students' Writing Performance, Anxiety and Self-Efficacy: A Latent Profile Analysis	EAP course

PS28	Khosravi et al.	Writing metacognitive strategy-based instruction through flipped classroom: an investigation of writing performance, anxiety, and self-efficacy	Flipped classroom
PS30	Tabari & Goetze	Exploring the impacts of task complexity, anxiety, and self-efficacy on L2 written production: Unraveling individual differences in TBLT	Task complexity and TBLT

This theme captures studies where the learning environment, instructional design, technology, task characteristics, or alternative learning contexts constitute the principal focus. This theme demonstrates the increasing diversification of L2 writing pedagogy beyond conventional classroom instruction. Virtual learning, AI-assisted writing, flipped classrooms, outdoor writing activities, EAP courses and task-based approaches are being investigated as alternative environments or pedagogical designs. The evidence suggests that instructional context can influence writing performance as well as affective variables such as anxiety, motivation and self-efficacy.

Interactions Between Writing Anxiety, Motivation & Instructional Innovations

This section answers research question 4: How do writing anxiety, writing motivation, and emerging institutional innovations interact in shaping the development and outcomes of second-language writing, and what gaps remain in the existing literature?

Table 5: Analysis for Themes

No	Theme	NO OF RECORDS	SUB-THEME	CENTRAL CONCEPTS
1	WRITING ANXIETY	12	Sources	Anxiety, self-efficacy, attitudes, perfectionism, affect
		7	Mitigation	Peer feedback, teacher support, corrective feedback, formative assessment
2	WRITING MOTIVATION	7	Goals	Motivation, Goal Orientation and Learner Engagement
		7	Strategies	SRL, metacognition, planning, monitoring, strategy use
3	EMERGING INSTITUTIONAL INNOVATIONS	6		AI, virtual learning, flipped classroom, EAP, TBLT, outdoor learning

The findings in Table 5 suggest that writing anxiety, writing motivation, and emerging institutional innovations are closely interconnected in shaping second-language (L2) writing development and outcomes. Writing anxiety is the most prominent theme, represented by 12 records, with central concepts including anxiety, self-efficacy, attitudes, perfectionism, and affect. This indicates that learners' psychological and emotional states are important dimensions of L2 writing development. The table further identifies seven records related to anxiety mitigation, highlighting peer feedback, teacher support, corrective feedback, and formative assessment as mechanisms that may help learners manage anxiety. In contrast, writing motivation is represented by 7 records, focusing on goals, motivation, goal orientation, learner engagement, and strategies. The emphasis on self-regulated learning (SRL), metacognition, planning, and monitoring suggests that motivation may support learners' capacity to actively regulate their writing processes and persist in challenging writing tasks.

Emerging institutional innovations, represented by 6 records, introduce an important contextual dimension through AI, virtual learning, flipped classrooms, EAP, TBLT, and outdoor learning. These innovations potentially provide new ways of supporting motivation, reducing anxiety, and improving writing development. However, the distribution also reveals important gaps in the literature. Most notably, the three

dimensions are not equally represented and appear to have been investigated largely as separate areas rather than as an integrated system. There is therefore a need for more research examining how institutional innovations simultaneously influence writing anxiety and motivation and how these affect actual L2 writing outcomes. Future studies should particularly examine the mediating roles of self-efficacy, engagement, and self-regulation and employ longitudinal or integrated research designs to establish how these relationships develop over time.

CONCLUSION

This systematic literature review demonstrates that writing anxiety, writing motivation, and emerging institutional innovations are closely interconnected in shaping second-language (L2) writing development and engagement. Writing anxiety emerged as the most prominent theme, with 12 records focusing on anxiety, self-efficacy, attitudes, perfectionism, and affect. The findings are consistent with Derakhshan and Liu (2026), who examined the interaction between writing self-efficacy, anxiety, motivation, and writing performance, and Khosravi et al. (2023), who identified perfectionism and writing anxiety as important factors in L2 writing performance. The reviewed studies also indicate that peer support, teacher support, corrective feedback, and formative assessment can help mitigate anxiety. For example, Weng et al. provided evidence of the motivational value of peer feedback, while Gou et al. highlighted the interconnected roles of teacher and peer support, anxiety, self-efficacy, and writing engagement.

Writing motivation was represented through goals and strategies, with studies emphasising goal orientation, learner engagement, self-regulated learning, metacognition, planning, and monitoring. These findings support the work of Shurovi, Yang, and Sun et al., which connects motivation with goal orientation, self-regulated learning, and writing development. Emerging innovations; including AI, virtual learning, flipped classrooms, EAP, TBLT, and outdoor learning provide additional contexts for supporting writing development and influencing anxiety, motivation, and self-efficacy. However, the review reveals that these three dimensions have largely been examined separately rather than as an integrated system. This has important implications for institutions and educators: writing instruction should combine anxiety-reduction practices, motivational support, and innovative learner-centred environments rather than treating these factors independently. Future research should therefore employ longitudinal and integrated designs to investigate how institutional innovations influence anxiety and motivation over time, particularly through the mediating roles of self-efficacy, engagement, and self-regulation, and should examine their effects on actual L2 writing outcomes.

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