



Article



On The Fear of Academic Writing: A Phenomenological Study on the Lived Experience of Senior High School Students on Academic Writing Apprehension

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Abstract

This study aimed to explore academic writing apprehension among senior high school students, which refers to the uneasiness learners experience when engaging in various academic writing activities. Specifically, the study addressed the following sub-problems: a) How do students view academic writing apprehension? b) What are the students' lived experiences of academic writing apprehension? c) How do students cope with academic writing apprehension? and d) What primer can be developed to help students cope with academic writing apprehension?

The researcher employed a phenomenological research design, specifically Psychological Phenomenology (also known as Empirical, Transcendental). Data collection was conducted through interviews, focus group discussions, and journal writing. Seven students from a public senior high school in the Philippines were purposively sampled as participants.

The findings revealed five themes: 1) negative views and feelings toward academic writing apprehension, 2) lack of language skills as a major contributor, 3) the role of teachers in students' academic writing apprehension, 4) writing practice as a coping strategy, and 5) self-motivation as a key factor in overcoming academic writing apprehension. Based on these results, a primer was developed to help students manage their academic writing apprehension. This study highlights the importance of understanding students' experiences to address academic writing challenges effectively.

Keywords

Academic Writing, Academic Writing Apprehension, Phenomenology, Teaching Writing

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Introduction

Academic writing is an important part of academic life. Bailey (2021) stated that academic writing is simply organized, allowing beginner writers to adopt an appropriate writing style, which is in formal written English. It follows the standards of a particular discipline, along with their technical vocabulary and principles for citing and referencing. When compared to everyday writing, academic writing uses much more precision. Bailey (2021) also emphasized that academic writing is like an argument, where one writes beyond description. Thinking of academic writing as an argument helps students compose a whole or part of an argument, encouraging them to write facts, ideas, and opinions into overall reasonable writing.

Nunan and Choi (2023) define academic writing as any formal written work composed in an academic setting, like a school. It comes in many forms, typically including literary analysis and research papers. In academic writing, detailed and explicit knowledge of language, as well as coherence and cohesion, are fundamental to good writing. Read (2024) stated that in schools, students are expected to read through other academic writing and use them in their own academic writing tasks. Academic writing involves choosing the best sources, reading and note-making, proofreading, and referencing. Read (2024) also noted that common errors in academic writing experienced by students writing in English as a second or third language include grammar, sentence structure, and word usage.

Academic writing skills are affected by numerous factors, one of which is academic writing apprehension. Al-Ahdal and Abduh (2021) defined academic writing apprehension as a fear of the writing process that outweighs the supposed advantage of writing. This phenomenon involves thoughts, convictions, and actions that deter students from starting or writing according to the expected level. Academic writing apprehension is a complex phenomenon, referring to the uneasiness learners experience when faced with various academic writing activities (Topuzkanamis, 2015). It can be considered a block causing negative feelings toward academic writing, often rooted in challenging and negative experiences (The Writing Center, 2019).

Several studies have investigated this phenomenon. Rohmah and Muslim (2021) found that students struggle to write academically because they are new to the writing process, with academic writing apprehension affecting their writing quality and perception. Using a qualitative case study, they gathered the perspectives of five English as a Foreign Language undergraduate students on their academic writing practices and apprehension through semi-structured interviews and document analysis. The findings revealed that the least anxious participants performed better in writing. Moreover, the areas where academic writing apprehension mostly lay were lack of writing practice, poor understanding of grammar, lack of vocabulary, and fear of negative feedback.

Jawas (2019) identified the contributing factors to writing apprehension felt by 80 Indonesian EFL students in essay writing and their coping strategies. A close-ended questionnaire on factors of writing apprehension and an open-ended questionnaire item on coping strategies were distributed to the students. The results revealed that classroom-based essay assignments generated the most apprehension, while collaborative peer or small group tasks for idea development and essay construction minimized their apprehension. Such findings suggest that students manage their writing apprehension by using their preferred strategies. Wahyuni et al. (2019) examined the writing apprehension of 132 undergraduate Indonesian EFL

learners using the Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) and the Causes of Writing Anxiety Inventory (CWAI). The findings showed that the students had a moderate level of writing apprehension, with the sources centered on topic choice, linguistic difficulties, and lack of writing practice. They coped with these through practice, positive thinking and relaxation, peer support, and resignation, ordered from most to least used.

Exploring academic writing apprehension is vital because it influences learning, writing performance, writing achievement, and attitudes towards the learning process (Dornyei, 2005 and Pajares, 2003 in Qashoa, 2014). This research aimed to explore academic writing apprehension among senior high school students. It considered the Affective Filter Hypothesis by Stephen Krashen as explained in Zhang (2023), positing that learners' acquisition of comprehensible input is influenced by an affective filter involving motivation, self-confidence, and apprehension. Emotional factors influence acquisition, affecting performance. Learners have less input with a high affective filter, whereas those with a low affective filter, meaning strong motivation, self-confidence, and manageable apprehension, have higher input or learning. This undertaking is supported by the theory of Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) by Horwitz et al. as highlighted by Tran (2012), which refers to "a distinct complex construct of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process." Despite the intricacies between foreign and second language learning, this theory bridges apprehension and difficulty in language learning and has been used in numerous research. It is accepted that apprehension likely causes and results from language difficulties and poor language learning skills.

Considering all these aspects, this research focused on students' views, experiences, and coping strategies regarding academic writing apprehension. Moreover, this study aimed to provide an understanding of academic writing apprehension, a complex phenomenon, as suggested by several research in the context of senior high school. The study is limited to select participants and does not aim to provide a general view of all senior high school students.

Literature Review

Academic Writing

Osmond (2024) characterized academic writing as writing that should be literal, meaning each word should be used precisely. The rules of academic writing apply across all subjects. Moreover, Osmond (2024) emphasized the importance of using a variety of sources, as they demonstrate that students have read widely and can identify key information. This requires referencing, which is essential in academic writing and demonstrates how and where students used their references.

Similarly, Walková (2024) highlighted that for English for Academic Purposes, academic writing is central to both teaching and research. It involves several considerations, such as intertextuality, which entails using other sources as evidence for one's argument through referencing. Furthermore, academic writing's language is specific, objective, and formal, catering to topics particular to a discipline and an academic audience, while demonstrating knowledge or contribution to knowledge. Effective paraphrasing and coherence are also crucial for academic writing. In agreement, Day (2023) aligned with Bailey (2021), clarifying that academic writing adopts an appropriate writing style, following formal English. Besides argumentation, academic writing focuses on critical analysis and evaluating the worth of sources. Thomson (2022) noted that students assigned academic writing tasks are expected to comprehend

their topics thoroughly. Citing and quoting are essential to academic writing as they prove extensive reading, thereby showing one's interests.

Moreover, Pu (2021) acknowledged academic writing as the most vital yet problematic academic task due to its requirement for critical thinking. In this context, academic writing is viewed as a social communication activity aimed at delivering a message to a specific audience, providing insights and information. Additionally, Pu (2021) stated that academic writing drafts reflect students' interaction with institutional requirements and are constructed with their cultural identity and critical argument.

As such, Graff and Birkenstein (2021) agreed that effective academic writing involves engaging in a conversation by summarizing others' viewpoints to set up one's argument. In constructing an argument, students must reference others' works through summarizing, quoting, or paraphrasing before introducing their ideas as a response. Meanwhile, Cassuto (2024) emphasized that good writing meets the needs of its audience, which may differ. Whong and Godfrey (2022) emphasized that strong critical thinking, the writer's position, and objective, formal language characterize good academic writing. Clarity, an essential quality of academic writing, significantly contributes to students' success and the development of their position and voice. The structure and organization of academic writing depend on its type, such as essays, research reports, or reaction papers.

Lastly, Anderson (2014) defined writing by distinguishing what it is not. Writing does not refer to a kit or program, test preparation, memorization of parts of speech, and is separate from reading. It is a transaction between reader and writer, a skill that can be acquired, igniting passion and freedom. According to Tangerpoon (2016), writing is considered the most challenging skill for learners because it requires extensive language schema about correct use of the language. It demands writers have considerable lexical and syntactic knowledge, as well as an understanding of organizational principles in the target language to produce good writing.

Academic writing has several traits. The first is reason over emotion, wherein the claims are supported with evidence, and exaggeration is absent, with a clear line of reasoning supporting the argument. The second trait is open-mindedness and discipline, acknowledging opposing views and including various credible sources. Lastly, the written product assumes a rational reader, with the writer anticipating that the reader will seek gaps in the argument and should be persuaded (Olson, 2013). Bailey (2014) stated that academic writing serves different purposes, such as reporting research, answering questions, discussing topics, and synthesizing research by other authors. Furthermore, it encompasses different types, like essays, notes, reports, projects, theses, and papers, which are common written works required for various academic courses. As studied by Chokwe (2013), academic writing is a core skill every student should possess. Academic writing skills are influenced by numerous factors, including learners' preparedness, school-level writing, socioeconomic factors, and reading skills development. Preparedness may depend on school experiences, family and work demands, and English language competence. School-level writing refers to classroom practices, while academic writing at this level pertains to its use as a requirement across subjects. Socioeconomic factors significantly influence students' academic writing skills, dictating the kind of knowledge and skills they possess. Lastly, reading skills contribute to writing skills since reading provides input for learners' writing abilities.

Academic Writing Apprehension

Apprehension is commonly experienced by second language and foreign language learners, particularly when learning a language in a formal setting, such as a classroom. This can cause negative effects on students, including agitation and stress. Among the various forms of language apprehension, academic writing apprehension seems to have a more significant negative impact on learners' writing quality. Students often exhibit this reaction through distress, melancholy, irritation, and various physical responses. It has been observed that this unfavorable response to academic writing adversely affects learners' writing quality, their success in completing different writing tasks, and their motivation and willingness to engage in academic writing (Liu and Ni, 2015).

Lin et al. (2018) discussed how academic writing apprehension causes learners to feel frustrated, perform poorly, and become less proficient in the learning process. This results in learners developing a negative view of academic writing and their own writing abilities, producing lower quality outputs, and often declining opportunities for writing. Moreover, Lin et al. identified signs of academic writing apprehension such as avoidance, physical reactions, and other psychological indicators. Avoidance is seen when learners might not attend classes, forget answers, or refrain from volunteering in class. Physical reactions include jittery actions, playing with objects and clothing, headaches, and bodily tension. Psychological signs vary depending on the students' culture and may include annoyance, avoidance, and masking behaviors, among others.

Using a descriptive correlational design on 128 EFL students, Al-Ahdal and Abduh (2021) investigated the use of writing strategies to reduce writing apprehension and improve students' writing achievement. They measured writing apprehension, strategies, and achievement through multiple writing workshops. The results revealed that there is no correlation between writing apprehension, writing strategy, and writing achievement, challenging the common assumption that writing apprehension directly impacts students' writing.

Ebedy (2021) examined the use of online debate to enhance argumentative writing and reduce writing apprehension among fourth-year EFL majors. With a sample of 50 students divided into experimental and control groups, the study employed pre- and post-tests, including an argumentative writing test and a writing apprehension measure, over an 11-week training program. The results showed that the experimental group, which received online debate training, demonstrated significantly higher argumentative writing skills and lower writing apprehension compared to the control group that followed regular instruction. The study recommended integrating online debate strategies into language teaching programs to improve writing outcomes.

Similarly, Ajmal and Irfan (2020) used a quasi-experimental design employing the Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) 22-item multidimensional questionnaire and interviews to investigate the effects of the process-genre approach as a tool to reduce writing anxiety among English academic writing learners. Their results indicated that the intervention was effective in reducing learners' writing apprehension. Akhtar et al. (2020) explored the effects of 27 undergraduate ESL students' attitudes on academic writing apprehensions and challenges using the Writing Apprehension Test. They found that challenges in academic writing are the main contributors to learners' writing apprehensions, while a negative attitude towards academic writing results in a lack of interest in it.

Hartono and Marahani (2019) explored the level of writing apprehension among Indonesian EFL undergraduate English literature students using a descriptive design through questionnaires. The findings revealed that students experienced a high level of writing apprehension, with cognitive apprehension being the most prevalent, primarily due to issues with grammar, vocabulary, and a lack of writing practice. Consequently, the researchers recommended that writing teachers provide students with grammar, vocabulary, and writing practice.

In their qualitative research, Miri and Joia (2018) delved into writing apprehension among Afghan English language learners, collecting data through semi-structured interviews. They found that writing apprehension has both positive and detrimental effects on learners and is exacerbated by a lack of writing activities. To cope, learners turned to teacher feedback, extensive reading, vocabulary practice, and writing practice. Also, Balta (2018) studied the correlation between writing skills, writing apprehension, and metacognitive awareness among 375 8th graders. It was found that low writing apprehension helps in writing argumentative texts successfully, while a positive relationship exists between writing skills and metacognitive awareness. Low writing apprehension and high metacognitive awareness positively impact writing skills.

In contrast, Daud et al. (2016), in a correlational study involving 186 third-year university students, found that learners with low writing performance exhibited a higher level of apprehension compared to those with high writing performance. This demonstrates the inverse relationship between apprehension and performance: the higher the apprehension, the lower the performance, influenced by learners' lack of language exposure and vocabulary.

Min (2014) focused on the English writing apprehension of final-year engineering students and revealed that somatic apprehension was most prevalent, indicating that students were most burdened by the effects of apprehension, reflected in tension and nervousness. Ekmekçi (2018) had similar findings with Turkish university students experiencing primarily somatic apprehension.

Additionally, Stewart et al. (2014) explored the relationship between student writing apprehension and self-efficacy concerning the use of metacognitive writing strategies. They discovered that alleviating writing apprehension and increasing self-efficacy were statistically significant in enhancing the use of metacognitive writing strategies, indicating a relation between writing metacognition and emotional factors like apprehension and self-belief. Nodoushan (2015) investigated the relationship between apprehension, writing ability, and performance among 137 EFL learners. Writing anxieties were categorized as debilitating, weakening writing ability and performance, or facilitative, increasing learners' interest. Findings showed that state apprehension, linked to emotional condition, is debilitating, whereas situational apprehension, linked to specific situations, and trait apprehension, linked to personality, are facilitative.

Conversely, Cokuk et al. (2015) examined the correlation between writing apprehension and writing disposition among 707 secondary school students. They found a positive linear relationship: the more positive the learners' writing disposition, the higher their writing apprehension. They suggested further exploration of writing apprehension in various contexts. Kara's (2013) case study on 150 first-year university students explored learners' attitudes towards academic writing and reasons for apprehension. The study concluded that apprehension stems from the nature of writing itself, writing as a skill,

academic writing teachers, and writing resources. Lack of writing practice and inadequate feedback from teachers intensified apprehension, while insufficient learning resources hindered a positive perception of writing.

Finally, Holland's (2013) explanatory case study on 11 community college students revealed contributors to academic writing apprehension, such as self-doubt and fear, writer's block, repetitive ideas, poor organizational skills, and a lack of knowledge of English standards. Students' insecurity and fear of negative evaluation were key underlying causes. Similarly, Gkonou (2011) found that negative attitudes towards academic writing, lack of confidence, and fear of evaluation heightened writing apprehension.

Research Questions

This study aimed to explore the academic writing anxiety among senior high school students. To solve the main problem, the researcher worked out the following central questions:

1. How do students view academic writing anxiety?
2. What are the students' lived academic writing anxiety experiences?
3. How do the students cope with academic writing anxiety?
4. What primer can be developed for students to cope with academic writing anxiety?

Methods

Research Design

The researcher employed phenomenological research design on the research problem of the study, which is an exploration of the academic writing apprehension among senior high school students. The researcher structured this paper with Psychological Phenomenology (also termed Empirical, Transcendental). Empirical phenomenological research utilizes an individual's experience to obtain rich descriptions of an event, situation, or a phenomenon as expounded by Moustakas (2011) in Creswell (2015), explaining that it focuses less on the interpretations of the researcher and more on description of the lived experience of the participants. Transcendental phenomenology analyzes the essences perceived by consciousness regarding individual experiences. (Padilla-Diaz, 2015).

Participants

In this phenomenological study, the participants were students from a local senior high school in Cabuyao City, Philippines who have all experienced the phenomenon being explored and can articulate their lived experiences, may be located at a single site, although they need not be (Creswell, 2015). By utilizing Purposeful Criterion Sampling Strategy, the researcher selected the individuals and sites for study because they could purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study thus providing quality assurance. There were seven participants in the study who have experienced academic writing apprehension.

Data Collection

The process of finding the participants, gaining access, and establishing rapport, which are all important to procure good data (Creswell, 2015). The first step is to secure a letter of permission from the City Schools Division Office. Consent of the participants and their parents was equally considered because it is important to have access and rapport to the vulnerable individuals participating in the study. The consent form contained: the right of the participants to voluntarily withdraw from the study at any time; the central purpose of the study and procedures to be used in the data collection;

comments about protecting the confidentiality of the respondents; a statement about a known risk associated with participation in the study; expected benefits to accrue to the participants as well as the researcher (Creswell, 2015). The researcher properly approached and explained to the participants the relevance of the study. The researcher used data triangulation through journal writing, interview, and focus group discussion, which used recording instruments.

Ethical Issues

As to the ethical considerations and data analysis, the researcher utilized Moustakas' (2011) approach as cited by Creswell (2015). The researcher asked for the consent of the participants to be interviewed. The participants were assured that their identity would remain confidential. Moreover, they were also informed that their responses or statements were dealt with secrecy, confidentiality, and privacy at all times.

Data Analysis

The study employed the phenomenological approach. This type of approach is aimed at gathering an in-depth understanding of human behavior and the reasons that govern such behavior. This used a systematic and organized gathering of textual data through observation and talk. The qualitative method investigated the why and how of decision making, not just what, where, and when. Consistent with the research method to be utilized, bracketing was the first step to be considered, in which the researcher set aside all preconceived experiences. After conducting journal writing, interviews, and focus group discussion, the researcher proceeded with horizontalization. The use of horizontalization assigned equal value to each statement which represents a segment of meaning. The gathered data were presented, compared, reconciled, and synthesized. The researcher developed a cluster of meanings from these significant statements into themes which were used to write textural descriptions of what the participants experienced. Significant statements were used to write descriptions, called imaginative variation or structural descriptions. From the structural and textural descriptions, the researcher wrote a description to represent the meaning and essence of the experience, which presents the overall essence of invariant structure.

After describing the overall "essence" of the phenomenon under study, the researcher met again with the participants to verify the synthesis of their responses. This was the last step done so that the participants themselves could clarify and rectify their responses so that the validity of the essence be obtained, thus establishing credibility.

Results

1. The students' View of Academic Writing Apprehension

Theme 1: Negative View and Feelings on Academic Writing Apprehension

The participants viewed academic writing apprehension with fear, self-doubt, and overwhelm. The participants have specifically described it as trembling in fear of rejection, or nervousness before a big test. Specifically, the fear of criticism or negative feedback, or fear of judgment, self-doubt or lack of confidence, and not meeting expectations, and emotional overload or having mixed emotions, feeling pressure. These emotions of academic writing have led to avoidance behaviors of procrastination or cramming.

- P1** "Academic writing apprehension causes one to tremble in fear of rejection... It is an unavoidable endeavor for most people especially when they have a lot on their minds."
- P2** "It is some kind of hindrance that someone feels to effectively write."
- P3** "The term 'apprehension' itself refers to fear, so 'academic writing apprehension' pertains to the fear associated with academic writing."
- P4** "Academic writing apprehension is the inability to fully express what one wants to say in writing."
- P5** "Writing apprehension is a fear to be criticized or judged by someone, especially experts."
- P6** "It's a lot of worry and self-doubt, and feeling somewhat overwhelmed."
- P7** "Academic writing apprehension refers to the negative emotions one may feel when they are doing a task related to writing."

These findings align with Al-Ahdal and Abduh's (2021) concept of academic writing apprehension, which is the fear outweighing the benefits of writing, that leads to avoidance of writing tasks and negative emotions. Also, they are consistent with Lin et al. (2018) that highlighted the psychological and physical reactions and avoidance behaviors, which mirror the experiences of the participants. Moreover, these findings parallel Liu and Ni's (2015) characterization of academic writing apprehension, in terms of varying emotional and physical responses.

2. The Students' Lived Experience in Academic Writing Apprehension

Theme 2: Lack of Language Skills as a Contributor to Academic Writing Apprehension

Lack of mastery of language skills, particularly in grammar, vocabulary, and fluency, intensified academic writing apprehension. Participants have admitted to overthinking their choice of words or vocabulary and grammar. Specifically, the participants admitted having grammar anxiety, limited fluency as evidenced by the lack of fluency in writing effectively or in the academic language, and the rules that must be followed. They see these gaps as failures on their end, which exacerbates their academic writing apprehension.

- P1** "Language skills... are one of the major things that cause my fear of rejection or disapproval when writing an academic paper."
- P2** "The more I know about grammatical writing, the more conscious I become with my writing... I have to follow the rules always because if not, my writing would be trash."
- P3** "A student may feel anxious if they lack the fluency to write effectively."
- P4** "If you're stuck using the same vocabulary, people around you might think you're just repeating your reports over and over."
- P5** "I am not confident enough about my writing skills and horrified to be criticized."

P6 "If the language is tough, writing is even tougher and scarier."

P7 "I always rely on grammar checkers such as Grammarly, Quillbot, etc."

These results are consistent with the findings of Rohmah and Muslim (2021), who found that a lack of grammar and vocabulary mastery heightened apprehension. Also, the participants observed overthinking of word choice and grammar rules mirrors Wahyuni et al.'s (2019) study, which identified that linguistic difficulties are primary sources of writing apprehension. These studies agree that deficits in language skills lead to academic writing apprehension.

Theme 3: Teachers' Role in Students' Academic Writing Apprehension

The participants shared that their teachers have polarizing impacts when it comes to their academic writing apprehension. Some participants see teachers as providers of positive reinforcement when students' confidence get booster after their praise, or with guidance that makes the students calm. Conversely, it is also found out that the teachers can also be a source of negative pressure from the students due to what the students view as high expectations or harsh criticisms from their teachers.

P1 *"Teachers supported me in making it better... it is quite helpful to go back to what they said to calm me down."*

P2 *"After teachers praised my writing, I gained confidence and joined journalism."*

P3 *"This apprehension can be worsened by high expectations placed on some students."*

P4 *"The fear of making a mistake while writing an essay can make you feel that people will laugh at it."*

P5 *"Teachers play a huge role... They improved my writing skills but also make me nervous."*

P6 *"Some teachers helped me be confident, but others made me more nervous with their criticism."*

P7 *"They played a big role in improving our language skills... our writing apprehension gradually got better."*

These results align with studies that highlight the dual role of teachers as alleviators and exacerbators of academic writing apprehension. Jawas (2019) notes that teacher support reduces apprehension, consistent with the participants' positive reinforcement experiences. Also, Ebedy (2021) found that teacher interventions can lower apprehension.

3. Students' Coping Mechanisms with Academic Writing Apprehension

Theme 4: Writing Practice as a Coping Strategy

The participants share that as they engage with regular, intentional writing practice, it serves as a powerful tool in combating the academic writing apprehension they face. Regular practice has made it possible for participants to get used to the writing tasks and have lower apprehension. The participants have also provided their approaches in their writing practice, such as freewriting or letting ideas flow, which helped in making the writing process more efficient. Also, writing practice leads to their improvement of writing skills, which leads them to becoming more capable and thereby boosting their confidence.

- P1** *"Since I am constantly writing for school requirements, over time I improve and feel less apprehension."*
- P2** *" Letting ideas burst out without overthinking mistakes helped me produce good writings... Writing with gadgets made me faster and more efficient."*
- P4** *"Practicing is like running—if you don't start, you'll never improve. Doing it helps you feel capable."*
- P6** *"The more I wrote, the less scary it became. I could see my progress, which boosted my confidence."*

The findings above are consistent with Rohmah and Muslim (2021) who emphasized writing practice is essential in countering academic writing apprehension. For Balta (2018), low apprehension is linked with metacognitive strategies and practice, similar to the participants' writing improvement through practice here. Also, for Stewart et al. (2014) writing practice reduce writing apprehension since it boosts the students self-efficacy. The studies validate that writing practice is a critical tool for remediating writing apprehension.

Theme 5: Self-Motivation as a Key Factor

While their strategies vary, the participants used self-motivation to reframe writing as a challenge instead of a threat. Some participants used reward-based self-motivation, which is in the form of providing themselves with treats and rest. For some, their motivation comes from their future-oriented mindset, believing that honing their writing skills will benefit them in the future and help them develop as individuals. Also, the participants also revealed that social and emotional leveraging for their self-motivation and pressure-drive motivation are other ways in which they push self-motivation in order to cope with the challenges posed by the academic writing apprehension.

- P1** *"By rewarding myself with food or time to rest... I remind myself that good things come with waiting."*
- P2** *"I imagine how relieving it will be to finally finish my writing tasks."*
- P3** *"I motivate myself by remembering that honing my writing skills will benefit me in my future endeavors."*
- P4** *"After finishing a task, I'll go out for fresh air or treat myself to some desserts."*

- P5** *"I motivate myself by talking to my friends... they give advice that could help me."*
- P6** *"I try to ask myself why I am doing this—to learn and grow."*
- P7** *"I pressure myself into thinking that I need to accomplish it right away before the deadline."*

These results mirror the findings of Wahyuni et al. (2019), which identified that positive thinking and peer support are top coping mechanisms for combating writing apprehension. Also, the view that writing as achievable, or challenge-over threat mindset, is consistent with the observations of Ajmal and Irfan (2020). Such studies agree that self-motivation through various ways is a buffer against writing apprehension.

4. Developing the Student Primer for Academic Writing Apprehension

Based on the five key themes in this study, Theme 1: Negative View and Feelings on Academic Writing Apprehension, Theme 2: Lack of Language Skills as a Contributor to Academic Writing Apprehension, Theme 3: Teachers' Role in Students' Academic Writing Apprehension, Theme 4: Writing Practice as a Coping Strategy, and Theme 5: Self-Motivation as a Key Factor, the researcher designed a primer that can address the issue of academic writing apprehension. The primer bridges the phenomenological findings into actionable strategies for students and teachers, with a focus on the facts of academic writing anxiety, how students experience writing anxiety, coping strategies for students, how teachers can help, resources, and checklists. While the primer synthesizes the lived experiences of the participants, its efficacy could be tested empirically.

Conclusions and Recommendation

Academic writing apprehension, or the fear of writing that outweighs the supposed advantage of writing, is a phenomenon experienced by senior high school students, which was the center of this study. Participants revealed that they have negative views and feelings on academic writing apprehension, specifically fear, self-doubt, and emotional overwhelm. They have consistently described it as fear of criticism, judgment, and failure to meet expectations that leads to avoidance behaviors such as procrastination and cramming. The lived experiences of the participants with academic writing apprehension have shed light on the lack of language skills as a primary contributor, in terms of their deficiencies in grammar, vocabulary, and fluency, pushing them to overthink their writing, perceiving gaps as their failures. Also, teachers play a polarizing role in students' academic writing apprehension, highlighting that teachers have an influence in the students' writing apprehension either positively through encouragement and guidance or through high expectations and criticism. To cope with these, the participants shared that writing practice helps them get used to writing tasks, which leads to improvement of their skills and confidence, with different strategies such as freewriting beneficial in enhancing their efficiency and mitigating their academic writing apprehension. Finally, the key coping strategy that the participants employ is the various self-motivation strategies, that include reward-based incentives, future-oriented thinking, and reframing writing as a challenge.

Based on the findings, this research recommends that teachers utilize structured writing practice in their teaching of academic writing. This can be in the form of low-stakes writing exercises in the form of freewriting and journaling, and scaffolded writing tasks which may allow students to build their writing confidence. Also, since the participants have shared that language skills contribute to their academic writing apprehension, targeted grammar and vocabulary practice can address the deficiencies in linguistic skills that the students experience. The teachers can also encourage the use of digital tools such as grammar checkers as supplementary aids rather than crutches in academic writing. Moreover, teachers should provide constructive, balanced feedback through acknowledging the strengths while guiding the areas of improvement in students' academic writing and adopt a mentoring approach when it comes to writing to help reduce the students' writing apprehension. Furthermore, they can encourage the students to set personal rewards for completing writing tasks and integrate peer-review sessions to build a collaborative environment for writing.

Future research could expand on the limitations of this study by exploring this phenomenon in other populations, such as students from different educational, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds, to highlight the universality of these findings. Since this study is qualitative in nature, other research can explore the phenomenon of academic writing through quantitative approaches. Also, experimental research or intervention studies, which test specific strategies like structured writing practice, low-stakes writing exercises, and peer feedback, can measure their impact on academic writing apprehension.

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