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Academic Writing Apprehension in Higher Education: A Systematic Review

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Abstract

Considering the crucial skill required in formal education, specifically in higher education, academic writing is a part of every academic writer's life. However, some writers often feel that they have insufficient knowledge of source use and academic writing. Responding to this issue, this systematic review aims to untangle factors encountered by the writers while having academic writing and the solution to cope with the problems. A literature search supported by Publish or Perish application explored academic articles published in Scopus and Web of Science databases from 2014 to 2022. Employing the PRISMA method, 19 academic articles in qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-method designs were selected to explore the issue. Exploring the selected articles, this systematic review resulted in the following findings: (1) the factors influencing students' writing apprehension include unfamiliarity with academic tone and style, beliefs about writing, cognitive and behavioral anxiety, and insufficient support for writing; and (2) to cope with this writing apprehension,

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students may seek help from others, improve their writing strategies, and effectively manage writing feedback. Furthermore, faculty members should provide more appropriate teaching techniques and opportunities for students to share ideas with their peers to reduce writing anxiety and apprehension. The implications for pedagogical practices and future research directions are further discussed.

Keywords: Academic writing, English, systematic review, writing apprehension.

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, writing has become a topic of interest for many researchers. This interest may stem from the fact that writing is a complex process involving several steps: pre-writing, drafting, getting feedback, revising, editing, and finally submitting (Paltridge & Starfield, 2007). Consequently, mastering this skill needs special attention. Furthermore, it serves various purposes, with academic writing being one of the most significant, especially for academicians or students. Writing for academic purposes differs from writing for leisure or personal enjoyment (S. Bailey, 2011), as it demands greater accuracy and objectivity. For instance, university students are required to write a thesis as part of their academic requirements. Accordingly, academic writing skill becomes necessary for them to succeed in their studies (Hyland, 2013). However, despite its importance, many students struggle with writing academically. Hyland (2013) further added that academic writing is quite challenging, specifically for a second or foreign-language writer, as different educational backgrounds, writing systems, learning experiences, motivation levels, expectations, and target needs result in different writing skills.

As a crucial ability, writing is not always an easy endeavor. The writers must call for various cognitive functions (Jalaluddin et al., 2015) to help them write effectively. To achieve an effective writing process, writers must set their goals, enact the process of idea generation and organization, and translate and revise those into their language (Demirel & Aydin, 2019). However, during the writing process, writers tend to have certain cognitive and affective problems (Bastug et al., 2017), mostly referred to as writer's block or writer's apprehension. Writing apprehension is associated with individuals who tend to avoid writing as they have high anxiety when asked to write (Daly & Miller, 1975; Fischer & Meyers, 2017; Limpo, 2018). Studies on writing apprehension have been conducted in recent years. For example, Aunurahman et al. (2017) uncovered that a negative perception of academic writing potentially brings writing apprehension to students.

Furthermore, Altınmakas and Bayyurt (2019) revealed that university students often encountered writing anxiety due to poor writing instruction and experience, negative beliefs about academic writing, or high faculty's demand and expectation of their academic performance, similarly found by Sakitri (2020). Ahmed and Güss (2022) explored the causes and solutions to cope with writer's block. They uncovered that writer's block is mainly caused by motivational and psychological factors, and it can potentially be reduced by writing on different topics or discussing ideas with others. Considering the prior studies, a review on previous studies focusing on the

causes and solutions to cope with writing apprehension may complete the literature and contribute positively to the field of academic writing, specifically in higher education. Although the causes and how to cope with the writers' apprehension were already discussed in detail by previous studies, the specific information about dealing with specific problems is insufficient. In this regard, this study attempts to review and understand the factors affecting the students' writing apprehension in academic writing and how to cope with this writing apprehension. To explore this issue, this study follows two research questions as follow:

1. What factors affect writing apprehension commonly encountered by university students in writing academic writing?
2. How can writers do to cope with writing apprehension?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

At the end of their studies, students must write a thesis as an inseparable part of the coursework to obtain an undergraduate degree (Ministry of Education and Culture of Republic of Indonesia, 2020). To accomplish this task, the students should think of what they have to write (a research topic) and how they report it so that their theses meet international standards of academic writing. The issue they investigate should fulfill certain criteria, such as whether the topic is relevant to their scientific field, whether it contributes to scientific development, and whether it has a novelty. Then, they must write their theses according to a particular structure, such as introduction, literature review, methodology, findings, discussion, and conclusion (Fleming & Kowalsky, 2021; Ormrod, 2022). In addition, they must have effective time management, understand institution policies and procedures, work with research advisors, and understand the committee's roles and responsibilities (Fleming & Kowalsky, 2021). Therefore, they frequently feel worried when they engage in the process of thesis writing.

Several studies have revealed the causes of writers' apprehension (Ahmed & Güss, 2022; Bastug et al., 2017; Chen & Wang, 2022). For example, a study conducted by Bastug et al. (2017) reported the cause of writer's block or writer's apprehension, such as limitation of subject and time, problems in the process of writing, the anxiety of being controlled and assessed, fear of being criticized, a lack of information about writing, and vocabulary problems. These causes can be observed at the beginning and during the writing process (Zorbaz, 2015). Another study also mentions that the primary causes of writers' apprehensions are psychological causes such as life stress, general anxiety, depression, and burnout (Ahmed & Güss, 2022).

Paltridge and Starfield (2007) reported four factors causing students to struggle writing in a second language: psycho-affective or emotional issues, behavioral issues, rhetorical issues, and social issues. Firstly, psycho-affective or emotional issues reveal that students tend to have low confidence in writing. Thinking they are incompetent in writing also blocks them from starting writing. Limpo (2018) confirmed that students with a greater concern for writing tend to have poorer writing performance. Also, their perfectionist thinking prevents them from finishing the writing, especially when the due date is close. Then they also point out that the lecturer's negative feedback affects the students' writing performance, although many other students believe that the lecturer's feedback is beneficial (Hyland, 2013; Ma, 2019).

Students have several reasons to engage in individual consultations with their lecturers. Firstly, such consultations allow the students to have their writing critically reviewed, have their questions answered and explained, and receive suggestions for improvement (Ma, 2019). Secondly, behavioral issues of the students show that some students believe they can only write when they want. Consequently, they often delay writing for other activities. Nonetheless, these behaviors are proven to be ineffective because writing as frequently as possible is advisable. The frequent practices make their writing ability better. Furthermore, starting the writing process early yields better results. Therefore, students should seize every opportunity to write and make time for it (McMullan, 2018). Lastly, social issues show that human needs social support. Students often lack peer feedback and encouragement in their writing endeavors. However, receiving frequent critiques and feedback on their work leads to improvements in their writing skills. Mochizuki (2019) confirms that peer feedback benefits both the recipient and the provider, enhancing the overall writing performance of the students. Furthermore, this practice fosters positive social relationships among the students.

3. METHODS

3.1 Research design

A systematic review model was used in the nomological network stage, which was used to explore what factors could contribute to writing apprehension and the solutions that have been made to overcome writing apprehension.

3.2 Search Strategy

One of the researchers conducted a library metadata search using the Publish or Perish 8.4.4 application to obtain data from Scopus and Web of Science databases. The researchera focused the search on relevant previous research from peer-reviewed journal articles over a decade. The researchers used four keywords in obtaining metadata: writing apprehension, writer's block, academic writing, and challenge. Then, the researchers stored the data in the form of a RIS/RefManager. The data were then imported into the Mendeley Desktop 1.19 application. Then the researchers updated the data on the application.

3.3 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The researchers exported the data from Mendeley Desktop with the…. The RIS file extension was then imported by the Covidence Systematic Review website-based application. Two other researchers conducted the inclusion and exclusion stages of 273 articles (see Figure 1). Then, a screening stage was carried out on titles and abstracts, which resulted in 108 articles being assessed for eligibility. The framework for conducting an eligibility assessment included a research focus (factors and solutions), which was then carried out on quality assessments in articles with the assessment framework offered by Jesson et al. (2011). Finally, based on the eligibility assessment stage, 19 articles were reread, which were used in the analysis stage.

Figure 1. PRISMA diagram.

3.4 Data Analysis

The researchers used ATLAS. ti 9.1.3 program to code on data analysis (FA= factors affecting, PS= proposed solution). In the first stage, the research team extracted relevant data based on Table 1. Then, the two researchers separately read the full-length article, identified keywords, provided highlights covering the stages of extracting the reviewed studies context, synthesizing the previous findings based on the open coding, applying coding following the focus of the systematic review (factors affecting writing apprehension and proposed solution) and reviewing and discussing the obtained data. The analysis of the resulting data was then put together. Following this, the research team conducted a review and engaged in discussions to refine and consolidate the findings derived from the data analysis process.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Characteristics of the Studies

In this part, we report the emergent context of the reviewed studies. Among 19 studies, the present study included Asia (n = 10), America (n = 6), Europe (n = 2), and Africa (n = 1). Students who engage with academic writing in a variety of subjects were included in the study, from undergraduate (n = 12), graduate (n = 2), postgraduate (n = 4), and mixed level of graduate and doctoral (n = 1) levels. Quantitative designs were primarily used in the studies (n = 8). The next most frequent research designs were qualitative designs (n = 6), and mixed-method (n = 5) were found to be the last. The majority of the sample size of the data ranged from 600-1000 participants (n = 13), between 11-110 participants (n = 3), less than 10 participants (n = 2), and two

groups (n = 1). Various studies have hours, weeks, months, semesters, years, and unknown duration.

Table 1. Context of the reviewed studies.

No.	First author	Year	Country	Sample	Level	Duration	Method
1.	Sanders-orio	2014	South Florida	738 participants	Undergraduate	Unknown	Survey & Test
2.	Lonka	2014	Finlandia	669 participants	Postgraduate	Unknown	Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)
3.	Maher	2014	USA	35 participants	Postgraduate	Unknown	Document Analysis & Interview
4.	Jee	2016	South Korea	61 students	Undergraduate	Two years period	Survey & Statistical Analysis
5.	Oliver	2016	South African	Two groups of students	Undergraduate	Unknown	Exploratory Factor Analysis
6.	Marandi	2017	Iran	84 students	Undergraduate	Unknown	Quasi-Experimental Design
7.	Jeyaraj	2018	Malaysia	Six participants	Postgraduate	Six months of full-time	Qualitative Design
8.	Gardner	2018	USA	A subgroup of six participants	Graduate & Postgraduate	Unknown	Retrospective Mixed-Methods Analysis
9.	Fry	2019	Idaho	4 students & 1 consultant	Graduate Students	A semester	Qualitative Design
10.	Bailey	2019	Korea	78 participants	Undergraduate	Six weeks program	Quantitative Survey Correlation
11	Park	2020	Korea	Thirty students	Undergraduate	Twice a week for one academic semester	Quantitative Experimental
12.	Torres	2020	United States	25 learners	Undergraduate	Unknown	Qualitative Design
13.	Langum	2020	Norwegian	Twenty-four participants	Undergraduate	Unknown	Narrative Inquiry
14.	Waer	2021	Egypt, Arab	103 students	Undergraduate	Twelve weeks	Experimental Design

Table 1 continued…

15.	Lin	2021	Hong Kong	82 students	Postgraduate	Unknown	Mixed-Method Quantitative and Qualitative Data (Survey & Interview)
16.	Fajaryani	2021	Indonesia	12 students	Undergraduate	Unknown	A Qualitative Case Study
17.	Van der Rijst	2022	Omani	757 participants	Undergraduate	Unknown	Mixed-Methods (Case Study Research Approach with A Survey and Interview
18.	Strickland	2022	United States	20 participants	Graduate	Six weeks 2-hour weekly workshops	Mixed Method (Survey & Reflection-Open Ended Questions)
19.	Almaawali	2022	Oman	43 students	Undergraduate	A semester (13 weeks)	A Case Study

4.2 Factors Affecting Writer's Writing Apprehension

4.2.1 Students struggle with academic tone and style in writing

The first factor involved in writing apprehension is the struggle of students to achieve clarity in academic writing. Students from non-native backgrounds have problems when writing in the target language. They have a significant challenge of limited vocabulary (van der Rijst et al., 2022), low linguistics competence (Jeyaraj, 2018), and a lack of familiarity with the audience and formal style of writing (Fry et al., 2019). Moreover, students from non-native backgrounds also face transfer errors when switching back and forth in writing (Maher et al., 2014; Torres et al., 2020). Torres et al. (2020) mention that non-native students' low writing proficiency and dominant use of informal language influence their writing performance. As they have low writing proficiency levels, students are unsure of the purpose of paraphrasing and do not understand academic integrity and ethical behavior (Jeyaraj, 2018; van der Rijst et al., 2022). Consequently, issues related to plagiarism also arise. Students resort to directly copying texts from sources or incorrectly paraphrasing, leading to plagiarism.

4.2.2 Students' beliefs about writing: low self-efficacy

Students tend to hold various beliefs about themselves regarding writing. The negative perception of writing could increase their anxiety and avoidance of writing (Lu & Kim, 2021). Therefore, low self-efficacy emerges as a factor contributing to writing apprehension, as indicated in the reviewed studies. An example of the correlation between writing self-efficacy and writing performance can be found in

Sanders-Reio et al. (2014). Participants who enjoy writing less and have low writing self-efficacy tend to attain lesser academic achievement. Moreover, people's behavior is influenced by self-efficacy or beliefs about their abilities (Olivier & Olivier, 2016). Negative thoughts about their writing and low self-confidence in expressing ideas are factors in high writing apprehension (Olivier & Olivier, 2016; Strickland et al., 2022; Torres et al., 2020). Overcoming these problems is not easy. Thus, this study will also explore targeting an efficient strategy in other parts.

4.2.3 Students face anxiety in writing

The previous section discussed how beliefs can enhance or hinder students' writing performance. While individual students hold their own beliefs, it is important to acknowledge that contextual factors also exert influence. Many studies reviewed that students' discomfort and anxiety are prominent issues associated with writing apprehension. Higher discomfort and anxiety about writing engendered the students to produce writing text with reduced efficiency and performance (Limpo, 2018). The findings from ten out of twenty studies mentioned that the students were facing the issue of anxiety in writing. Two types of anxiety were found in the reviewed studies: cognitive and behavioral. Cognitive anxiety refers to the mental aspect of anxiety, including expectation, a preoccupation with performance, and concerning others' perceptions. In contrast, behavioral anxiety refers to defense strategies that respond to cognitive anxiety, such as avoiding writing (D. Bailey, 2019).

4.2.4 Cognitive anxiety: dysfunctional emotions

Students often experience dysfunctional emotions such as stress, anxiety, exhaustion, and lack of interest (dysphoria or negative mood). This was the case with the participants in the study conducted by Lonka et al. (2014), Olivier and Olivier (2016), Gardner et al. (2018), Waer (2021), Al Maawali (2022), Strickland et al. (2022), and van der Rijst et al. (2022). These studies reported that students faced constant problems such as stress, anxiety, exhaustion, and lack of interest (negative mood) in starting writing that may implicate issues in finishing texts. Negative experiences in academic writing may cause the students to develop a fear of failure, inability to write, doubt in their writing ability, and in the worst case, total writer's block (Gardner et al., 2018; Lonka et al., 2014; Olivier & Olivier, 2016). In the study by Gardner et al. (2018), six students experienced anxiety about writing from their previous educational background, native language, and self-perception as writers. One student named Daniela admitted that her anxiety prevented her from doing more than the bare minimum regarding writing. Moreover, Al Maawali (2022) found that the fear of expressing ideas in writing often resulted in repeated deletions, leading students to become victims of writer's block.

4.2.5 Cognitive anxiety: fear of error and fear of getting judged

Fear of evaluations contributes the most to students' anxiety (Park, 2020). In a case study conducted by Al Maawali (2022), it was found that in the first few weeks of writing, all students experienced fear of making errors and fear of being judged by their teacher. Interestingly, teacher support negatively influenced the student's

performance. Teachers did not act as apprentice writers like the students, so they had short social relationships. Students' fear of making errors and being judged was occurred when they needed to share their writing with others (Fry et al., 2019; Gardner et al., 2018) and when their work was being evaluated or assessed (Olivier & Olivier, 2016). Furthermore, the student's desire to stay true to the data caused the fear of making errors. The students faced difficulties interpreting the social context in which the data emerged (Langum & Sullivan, 2020).

4.2.6 Cognitive anxiety: fear of having a poor grade

The students feared of getting poor grades as various aspects of writing compositions needed to be evaluated (D. Bailey, 2019). The fact is that writers' apprehension and performance reinforce each other. Notwithstanding, writing apprehension may still influence students' attitudes but does not necessarily influence the students' poor marks (Olivier & Olivier, 2016).

4.2.7 Cognitive anxiety: impatience in writing

Studies that show the students' habit of avoiding the editing process on their writing task can be found in Fry et al. (2019) and Strickland et al. (2022). Editing their writing could significantly improve the quality of their work. However, students feel that the writing process is too slow, and there is not enough time to draft and revise their work (Strickland et al., 2022).

4.2.8 Behavioral anxiety: perfectionism in writing

Two beliefs and thinking patterns are associated with writer's block: the fear of being judged and adherence to rigid rules (belief about acceptable writing practice). Students' perfectionism in writing is caused by believing that the audience will negatively judge their writing (Strickland et al., 2022). This review corroborates that anxiety during writing could contribute to a negative attitude.

4.2.9 Students's low writing skills

Many common writing problems are experienced by students, including issues such as insufficient word use, inappropriate word choice, syntactic error, disorganization, and lack of ideas (Fajaryani et al., 2021; Lin & Morrison, 2021; Park, 2020; Torres et al., 2020). The student's language competencies constrain them to work on their writing, so they rarely write and consider writing skills less critical. Therefore, effective solutions should be considered to strengthen the students writing and thinking skills.

4.2.10 Students receive insufficient support

Writing classes should provide meaningful writing experiences intended to develop students writing confidence within a supportive classroom environment. The writing experiences should support the students' writing growth, development, and value rather than solely focusing on their errors (Mascle, 2013). However, the

reviewed studies found that the students often received insufficient support from instructors (Jee, 2016; Waer, 2021) or fellow friends (Jeyaraj, 2018). Writing requires interaction involving social networks, institutional contexts, and peer relations (Jeyaraj, 2018). Nonetheless, not all students can find all the support. The instructor's availability was limited due to the time constraint and workload. Therefore, the instructors' feedback and individual scaffolding somehow become another reason students have a high writing apprehension (Waer, 2021). Hence, a supportive, in-depth learning environment was needed where the instructors provided sufficient time to practice writing and give feedback (Jee, 2016). However, another issue of the instructor's support also arises. Al Maawali (2022) states that face-to-face writing instructions formed high apprehension. Students tend to lower their writing apprehension when their class is integrated into the asynchronous discussion. This brings us to find a course program with sufficient support and characteristics.

4.3 Coping with Writing Apprehension

4.3.1 Seeking helps from others

Writing apprehension is quite challenging, specifically for university students who need to write various academic writing genres to be able to graduate. One of many ways to cope with this writing apprehension is by discussing the writing ideas and how to write them effectively with friends (Fajaryani et al., 2021; Jeyaraj, 2018). Students may get inspiration and solve their writing problems by discussing them with others. Jeyaraj (2018) reports that students' participation in the scholarly community develops their views of academic writing and improves their writing strategy to learn how to write from the community. Furthermore, students may feel 'blindness' in writing when discussion and dialogue exchange about writing is lacking (Starke-Meyerring, 2011). It indicates that participating in the community, interacting with its members, and sharing ideas in writing help students solve their problems in writing and improve their writing strategies.

This phenomenon also strengthens the use of writing groups among university students. Students' participation in peer writing groups provides opportunities for the students to share ideas for writing and receive continued assistance in the writing process (Li & Vandermensbrugghe, 2011). Furthermore, students may increase their awareness of language use and reader awareness since they act as both writers and readers in the writing groups (D. Bailey, 2019). In peer writing groups, students may learn from each other and reduce their anxiety when they learn from someone superior. van der Rijst et al. (2022) also emphasize the importance of groups in learning writing. In groups, students can discuss ideas for writing, solve their problems, and write more effectively. Collaborative writing is also necessary to solve writing problems (Olivier & Olivier, 2016). They reveal that drafting writing and giving motivation in collaborative writing can reduce students' writing apprehension.

Students may cope with writing apprehension by seeking other help, for instance, a writing specialist (Gardner et al., 2018). A writing specialist can advise students on how to write more effectively with their coaching-like teaching style. The students there show their improvement in writing after visiting a writing specialist several times. In Gardner et al.'s (2018) study, the students were asked to write down what came to their mind without further thinking and edited the writing later. The students

then revealed that their writing skills improved as their practice writing frequently and became accustomed to writing. Additionally, they can seek more information they need in books or dictionaries (Lin & Morrison, 2021). Gaining more insights into their writing problems will help them understand the problem and how to cope with it.

4.3.2 Writing feedback

Studies reported that writing feedback is essential in improving students' writing performances and reducing writer's block. Park (2020) and van der Rijst et al. (2022) revealed that weekly teacher and peer feedback might help students improve their writing to have higher self-efficacy. It indicates that writing feedback can give encouragement, correction, and more insights into writing that positively impact the students' writer's block. In van der Rijst et al.'s (2022) study, they benefited from writing feedback to avoid plagiarism. Specifically for peer feedback, students can independently think about their writing mistakes and how to correct them, leading to improvement (Gardner et al., 2018). Additionally, Olivier and Olivier (2016) emphasized that positive writing feedback contributes to reduced writer's block among students. It somehow encourages students to write more and practice their writing skills so that they 'forget' their anxiety in writing.

Another writing feedback that is popular in this digital era is computer-mediated writing feedback. It can mediate teacher and peer feedback to be more doable for the students. Marandi and Seyyedrezaie (2017) found that face-to-face instruction in writing leads to higher writing apprehension. The students were reported to be more anxious when they should receive their feedback face-to-face. Furthermore, their study also highlighted that using Google Drive-integrated writing instruction could reduce students' writer's block since they can receive their teacher's feedback and see the other students' teacher feedback. It also emphasized that this computer-mediated writing instruction helps students reduce their anxiety since they can participate in a learning environment as anonymous students.

Writing feedback can also be automatically provided with artificial intelligence (AI) support in some writing applications, such as Grammarly and Pigai. This feedback is the most favorable among introvert students since they do not need to interact with others to achieve this automated writing evaluation (AWE) feedback. Waer (2021) reported that AWE feedback provides immediate writing feedback and options for revising their writing which is probably unavailable in regular writing feedback due to the teachers' workload. Furthermore, prior studies (Cotos, 2011; Hojeij, 2022; Ranalli, 2021; Wilken, 2018) proved that AWE positively impacts students' writing by pointing out errors and mistakes. However, since AWE is provided by a non-human application, students need to be critical and cautious in responding to the feedback since some AWE-based applications potentially provide inaccurate writing feedback (Ranalli, 2021).

4.3.3 Effective writing strategy

Another way to avoid writer's block is by planning the writing process carefully and strategically (Lin & Morrison, 2021). By applying a writing strategy, the writing process can be conducted more efficiently and reduce writer's block. Fajaryani et al. (2021) revealed that students apply some writing strategies in coping with writer's

block: (1) cognitive strategies consisting of brainstorming and making outlines and (2) metacognitive strategies consisting of self-editing and revision. In their study, the students first brainstorm ideas for the argumentative task's topic, write sentences they are familiar with, and continue discussing the topic. Furthermore, the students also somehow write more frequently to identify their mistakes. Then, they check their writing several times and self-edit the writing. These findings indicate that students' independence to identify and revise mistakes is important in reducing writer's block. Additionally, Lin and Morrison (2021) revealed that students read published academic papers as their writing models. This reading exposes students to the rhetorical structure of academic papers and how to write them rhetorically. Also, some students used machine translation (MT) to make their writing more grammatically accurate, which means that technical support is needed to reduce their writing apprehension.

4.3.4 Appropriate teaching strategy

Olivier and Olivier (2016) suggest that the student-centered teacher method can reduce students' writer's block. This suggests that teachers must select a teaching method that provides opportunities for students to actively engage in the learning process. Also, their study explained that students need more specific writing instruction to write more appropriately. Teachers also need to encourage students' positive attitudes toward writing, as Zhang and Lu (2022) reported that a positive attitude is one key to successful learning. Additionally, Al Maawali (2022) emphasized that teachers need to take the role of an apprentice writer to become 'closer' to their student's level of knowledge and skills in writing. Then, teachers can provide more writing exposure for their students (Jee, 2016). They, for instance, can provide individual tutoring for students to reduce students' writer's block. Teachers may also give the students chances to join writing workshops to get more exposure to the writing models and potentially get positive feedback from the workshops (Gardner et al., 2018). Another way is explaining writing models by giving slides accompanied by writing tasks that help students reduce their writer's block, as van der Rijst et al. (2022) found. It somehow provides appropriate and interesting learning media so that students' interest in the learning materials will increase. Their findings strengthen Kvinge's (2018) findings that providing presentation slides positively impacts the students' learning.

5. DISCUSSION

The findings of this review suggest that several factors influence students' writing anxiety. These elements can be roughly grouped into the academic tone and style issues, students' self-efficacy, writing beliefs, writing anxiety, poor writing abilities, and a lack of peer and teacher assistance. It is essential to comprehend the consequences of these elements for successful tactics and treatments to reduce writing apprehension and enhance students' writing ability.

First, non-native speakers' academic tone and style difficulties emphasize the significance of offering language support and specialized teaching in academic writing practices (Yahia & Egbert, 2023). It might entail providing explicit instruction in academic terminology, grammar, and syntax and tips on summarizing, paraphrasing,

and properly citing sources to prevent plagiarism. Additionally, including cultural and linguistic diversity in writing lessons may aid students in navigating the challenging requirements of academic writing (Strauss, 2017; Suryani et al., 2013). Also, it has been demonstrated that asking for assistance from others—such as friends, writing clubs, and writing professionals—can help students improve their academic tone and style (Cui et al., 2022). Students can get over their writing "blindness" and develop their writing methods by participating in conversations and collaborative writing.

Second, writing apprehension is influenced by students' low writing self-efficacy and negative writing beliefs. Goal-setting, self-monitoring, and self-reflection exercises are a few treatments that instructors can use to help students become more self-sufficient writers (Chung et al., 2021; Wilson et al., 2022). Additionally, low writing self-efficacy and negative beliefs can be handled by effective writing techniques such as cognitive and metacognitive strategies, writing models, and machine translation (Golparvar & Khafi, 2021; Teng & Yue, 2022). These techniques assist students in developing a more favorable belief of their writing abilities and reducing their writing anxiety.

Third, writing apprehension is significantly influenced by writing anxiety, both cognitive and behavioral anxiety. Teachers could use various techniques such as stress-reduction methods, mindfulness exercises, and cognitive-behavioral methods to challenge students' negative writing thoughts and beliefs to help students manage their writing anxiety (Burns et al., 2022; Hazlett-Stevens et al., 2019). Additionally, lowering anxiety and fostering writing development may depend on the supportive and non-threatening learning environment in the classroom where students are comfortable sharing their writing and getting helpful feedback (Monteiro et al., 2021). Furthermore, computer-mediated writing feedback has become popular among students, specifically those anxious about receiving feedback in person (e.g., Google Drive or AI-powered writing programs) (Fan & Xu, 2020; Sherafati et al., 2020; Zhao, 2022). However, they need to be critical and cautious in accepting AI-based feedback since it might not be accurate.

The findings also reveal low writing skills and insufficient instructor support contribute to writing apprehension. Thus, implementing comprehensive writing instruction that covers various aspects of the writing process, such as planning, drafting, revising, and editing, is crucial. Moreover, the importance of employing appropriate teaching strategies in reducing writing apprehension cannot be overlooked. Student-centered teaching methods, positive attitudes toward writing, and increased exposure are critical components of effective writing instruction (Belyaeva, 2022). Additionally, providing students with opportunities to practice and refine their writing skills through regular writing assignments and meaningful feedback can help build their writing competence and confidence (Yu & Liu, 2021). On the other hand, faculty can establish a policy and facility to involve instructors in providing effective feedback and scaffolding, implementing peer review activities, and establishing writing centers or support services that offer individualized assistance to students (Gallagher et al., 2020; Werner, 2013).

Addressing writing apprehension among students is vital for their academic success and personal growth. By understanding the contributing factors, such as struggles with academic tone and style, self-efficacy, anxiety, low writing skills, and insufficient support, educators and institutions can develop effective strategies and interventions to improve students' writing abilities. Fostering an inclusive and

supportive environment that embraces cultural and linguistic diversity, encourages self-reflection, and reduces anxiety is paramount in cultivating confident, skilled writers. Educators and institutions should consider implementing strategies that promote collaboration, provide constructive feedback, and create supportive learning environments to help students overcome writing apprehension and succeed in their academic endeavors. Moreover, future studies may explore alternative strategies to provide students with opportunities for collaboration and support, such as online platforms or tutoring programs. Also, they may investigate ways to improve the accuracy of AI-based writing feedback and examine how different feedback modalities can be effectively combined to optimize writing instruction. Last, it is advisable to continue this current study by exploring possible variables and their interplay in reducing writing apprehension among university students.

6. CONCLUSION

This systematic review concludes that several factors cause students to experience writing apprehension. Understanding these factors brings opportunities to mitigate the improvement of the student's writing performance. According to this review, the factors include (1) difficulties with academic tone and style in writing, (2) beliefs about writing, such as low self-efficacy, (3) anxiety related to writing, (4) inadequate writing skills, and (5) insufficient support for students. The factors involved in writing apprehension tend to direct the students to have poor writing performance. These findings corroborate the conclusion of Autman and Kelly (2017) about numerous causes of writing apprehension. In addition, some solutions were also found in the reviewed studies, such as (1) discussing ideas with others, (2) receiving writing feedback, (3) adopting effective writing strategies, and (4) implementing appropriate teaching strategies. Such solutions would enable students to improve their writing performance and reduce apprehension. Moreover, by implementing a course program that effectively supports writing performance, writers are expected to express their ideas and use specific language choices meaningfully. Based on the observations from the reviewed studies, it is essential to design courses responsive to solving the issue of students' writing apprehension. We recommend courses that offer ample support and adopt strategies to reduce students' writing apprehension and improve their performance. Moreover, a discussion forum could foster student communication and share resolutions about their writing.

Despite its implications, several limitations of this article need to be noted. First, the articles were only selected from Scopus and Web of Science databases; it may not cover the issue in all related articles. Thus, a future systematic review with more extensive data and various databases may be worthwhile. Second, the findings of this article were based on the previous articles' findings, so a research-based article confirming the results of writing apprehension and coping strategies will be interestingly accompanied and tested by the current findings. Last, this article focuses on higher education students and may not cover the context at other education levels. A similar study in elementary or secondary levels of education may be needed to broaden the study of writing apprehension and academic writing.

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