

Writing anxiety among prospective nonlanguage teachers: A quantitative study of a nonmetropolitan state university

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ABSTRACT: This research focuses on exploring the aftermath and diverse impacts of writing anxiety experienced by prospective nonlanguage teachers. The study primarily delves into the levels and types of writing anxiety that disrupt the academic performance and personal pursuits of future educators. The participants in this study encompassed 165 students pursuing majors unrelated to language, such as Bachelor of Secondary Education Major in Mathematics (BSED Math), Bachelor of Culture and Arts Education (BCAED), and Bachelor of Special Needs Education (BSNED). To ensure accurate data collection, the study employed assessment tools, namely, the Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) and the Causes of Writing Anxiety Inventory (CWAI), both exhibiting high-reliability scores of .757 and .936, respectively. Employing one-way ANOVA, the collected data were subjected to statistical analysis. The findings of the study indicated that the participants consistently experienced heightened anxiety levels in writing. The investigation also revealed that among the various types of writing-related anxiety, cognitive anxiety emerged as the most prominent, followed by somatic anxiety and avoidance behavior. Furthermore, the study identified time constraints and the pressure to achieve perfection as the two most prevalent causes of writing anxiety among the participants. The conclusions drawn from these findings are extensively discussed within the study, shedding light on the implications for both educators and students in a nonmetropolitan state university.

KEYWORDS: anxiety; education; macro-skills; nonlanguage majors; writing; prospective teachers

1. Introduction

In the realm of education, the significance of writing cannot be overstated. Writing serves as a means to convey emotions and viewpoints (Childs, 2020), allowing students to express their thoughts and share their knowledge. Bell and Hotson (2021) further emphasize that writing plays a pivotal role in reinforcing various academic pursuits, particularly within higher education. In this context, writing does not only deepen students' self-awareness but also connects them to the broader world (Troia, 2019).

Given the paramount importance of writing, particularly in academic settings, it becomes evident that crafting an effective written piece demands more than rudimentary writing skills. Students' writing proficiency is rooted in their grasp of organizational structure, language usage, content, writing processes, and other concepts acquired during their prior English coursework (Jwa, 2019). Insufficient knowledge

and skills in fundamental strategies such as prewriting, drafting, editing, and goal setting also contribute significantly to students' struggles with writing efficacy (Ceylan, 2019). As affirmed by Golda (2015), the journey to becoming a proficient writer is a gradual one, and students' developmental progress is notably gradual, rendering writing instruction and learning endeavors particularly challenging.

In the arena of English education, writing emerges as a macro skill of paramount importance, although its complexity often gives rise to anxiety. This assertion finds support in various studies, including Thevasigamoney and Yunus (2014), who note that many learners find writing infuriating, often shying away from it altogether. Sulaiman (2014) adds that this difficulty and anxiety are not inherent to learners; rather, the learning environment significantly contributes to stress and negative attitudes toward foreign language acquisition. To provide further clarity, Younas et al. (2014) identify factors such as fear of critical feedback from instructors, lack of writing confidence, and inadequate verbal proficiency as triggers for anxiety when using English as a second language.

Digging deeper into the intricacies of writing, this current research embarks on a quest to explore anxiety's relationship with writing. Anxiety, as a facet of mental health, holds global prevalence (Dalfomo et al., 2022; Tanpoco et al., 2023). Defined as an eagerness to perform a task that is either imminent or has already occurred, coupled with a persistent sense of apprehension and weariness, anxiety's influence is pervasive (Yastibas and Yastibas, 2015). Wang (2021) further contends that lower anxiety levels correlate with enhanced performance in story-writing tasks.

Within the domain of language, anxiety is a multifaceted topic, especially when discussing writing anxiety in a second language. This research narrows its focus to this particular facet. Writing anxiety is categorized into cognitive anxiety, somatic anxiety, and avoidance behavior; this phenomenon is not a straightforward linear process but rather involves intricate feedback mechanisms (Cheng, 2004).

Numerous studies investigate the categories, levels, and causes of writing anxiety. For instance, Mesghina and Richland (2020) highlight age and gender's roles in expressive writing's benefits, while Rezaei and Jafari (2014) point to cognitive anxiety as the predominant type. In contrast, Min and Rahmat (2014) contend that somatic anxiety holds the highest significance.

Furthermore, the origins of writing anxiety have been extensively examined. Kusumaningputri et al. (2018) find inadequate writing practices to be a leading cause, whereas Na (2007) identifies peers' and instructors' presence as unsettling triggers. Rezaei and Jafari (2014) highlight performance pressure, negative feedback, low self-esteem, and limited linguistic proficiency as significant contributors.

Drawing from the contextualized studies mentioned above, a gap emerges in addressing writing anxiety among nonlanguage students. This research seeks to bridge this gap, focusing on prospective teachers pursuing nonlanguage majors. The study aims to unravel the types, levels, and factors influencing anxiety in writing among these students in a nonmetropolitan state university. Beyond contributing essential data on writing anxiety, this research aims to provide the basis for future studies that address anxiety's adverse effects on cognitive and affective learning in nonlanguage courses.

Moreover, it is important to recognize that a significant portion of the existing research on writing anxiety predominantly emanates from western nations, with conspicuously limited representation from the Asian region, notably the Philippines. Consequently, this study assumes a pivotal role in bridging this conspicuous gap in the literature, functioning as an indispensable resource poised to augment the corpus of knowledge regarding writing anxiety.

2. Research questions

This study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- (1) What is the overall writing anxiety level that prospective nonlanguage teachers experience?
- (2) What is the general writing anxiety type that prospective nonlanguage teachers experience?
- (3) What is the general cause of writing anxiety that prospective nonlanguage teachers experience?
- (4) Do writing anxiety types among prospective nonlanguage teachers significantly differ across their majors?
- (5) Do the causes of writing anxiety among prospective nonlanguage teachers significantly differ across their majors?

3. Review of related literature

3.1. Writing

In the teaching profession, learning a language requires mastery of macro skills, to which writing is fundamental and essential, a skill that a prospective teacher must possess to deliver quality education and showcase mastery of the language.

Possessing mastery and skill in writing will not only foster your academic endeavor as a student but will notably give you an advantage in the professional world, as you have an edge in communication, both in verbal and written aspects. Thus, harboring expertise in writing will also provide you with essential skills to accomplish certain tasks in writing.

On the same page, Ariyanti (2016) contends that writing is a paramount ability that should be mastered by learners, as it will imbue students with the skills to finish tasks such as dissertations, individual research, and final requirements, which will be crucial to succeeding and finishing their studies within the educational institution.

Yuang-bing (2011) contemplates that one of the most challenging aspects of learning a second language has constantly been developing academic writing skills. Academic writing is the use of punctuation and language, which adhere to very rigid norms. Aside from the strict grammar rules, academic writing mostly concentrates on abstract concepts that cannot be described in the real world. Moreover, the usage of citations and references to other works is also necessary for academic writing (Farahani and Mohammed, 2018). On the other hand, non-academic writing does not abide by grammatical standards and guidelines making it less complex compared to academic writing.

Furthermore, writing is one of the crucial pillars of learning. However, although writing is an imperative element of quality education, it is incredibly challenging to master, as it requires critical and logical thinking to produce a comprehensive output, partnered with gathering significant data to prove a given point (Kim et al., 2021).

To put it into perspective, writing is a skill that is most crucial in modern education may it be in academic or non-academic form. It plays an essential part in disseminating quality information through the composition and combination of structured grammar wherein every prospective English language teacher should gain mastery.

3.2. Writing anxiety

Writing is an integral part of education and a fundamental skill that should be practiced by students. It must be developed and fostered to achieve academic growth and educational advantage. Nevertheless,

it is one of the macro skills in a language that is challenging and complex. The level of difficulty in acquiring mastery in the writing process has transpired into frustrations and apprehensions that have resulted in the coinage of the term “writing anxiety” (Cheng, 2004). Accordingly, this term should be clearly defined, pertaining to its effects and negativity on students.

Subsequently, Basturkmen and Lewis (2002) highlight that writing anxiety has deliberate consequences for students, as prolonged tension and apprehension may result in poor academic performance and underdeveloped written communication skills. Additionally, according to the studies of Cheng (2002), anxiety is a combination of negative attitudes that progress into fear, unease, and discomfort that is clearly observed during classroom activities and tasks given to students. This claim is supported by the studies of Jebreil et al. (2015) and Smith (2004). These actions of anxiousness are tangibly visible based on their demeanor, attitude toward written activities, and gestures during writing. Moreover, this can also be observed through the individual output that is submitted, which normally contains insufficient and unsatisfactory content (Cheng, 2002).

Additionally, Cheng (2004) maintains that writing anxiety has progressed due to several sources, wherein students have been facing a continued predicament, namely, fear of literary criticism from their professors and teachers, lack of self-esteem and intellectual confidence, uncertainty of the process in accomplishing written tasks and the negative outlook of failing the subject that corresponds to embarrassment and humiliation. Hamidun et al. (2012) emphasize that prolonged exposure to anxiety within the four corners of the classroom will have an adverse effect on the mental and emotional state of the student; this continuous apprehension and tension will inevitably result in poor academic performance, insufficient learning, and loss of motivation to study.

Referring to the study of Wolters (2003), writing anxiety likely occurs in accordance with the second language or L2. Most of the activities, tasks, and requirements incorporated in schools are in the English language, wherein many students have limited knowledge, vocabulary, and background, which has been ongoing since their tenure in elementary education. This study correlates with Gupta and Woldemariam (2011), who discuss that students who are experiencing anxiety due to the level of difficulty in utilizing the L2 or the English language have shown significant results that their motivation and drive to study have been diminished.

With studies concerning anxiety in writing, it can be inferred that writing is not a skill to be given lesser importance compared to the other macro skills of language.

3.3. Types of writing anxiety

Mastering the art of writing is crucial within the frontiers of education; the level of expertise needed to integrate this skill requires both knowledge and the utmost diligence in studying (Mak et al., 2008). In this light, multiple forms of anxiety that hinder the learning of students have emerged. Cheng (2004) proposes a conceptual classification of the type of writing anxiety that continually causes distress and tension toward learners; these are further classified into three specified types cognitive anxiety, somatic anxiety, and avoidance behavior.

Cheng (2004) substantiates that cognitive anxiety pertains to the degree of tension and distress that an individual feels in response to his evaluation of his performance in accomplishing a certain task. The thought of performing unsatisfactorily and yielding mediocre output affects the person’s ability to think clearly, causing a loss of motivation and interest. To put it simply, cognitive anxiety is the state in which a person questions their ability to fulfill a task, as they view themselves as both incompetent and

unreliable. Learners who experience this type of anxiety harbor fear of receiving negative feedback from classmates, hostile criticisms from teachers, and fear of being ridiculed and humiliated for their output and work (Cheng, 2004; Mogg et al., 1990).

Furthermore, Cheng (2004) affirms that somatic anxiety, which is the second form of anxiety in writing, describes the condition in which a person has several disturbances when facing written tasks, namely, in the physiological, emotional, and mental aspects. Learners who experience this type of anxiety undergo involuntary responses and demeanors, such as profuse sweating, uncontrolled discomfort, mannerisms, and accelerated heartbeats. In other words, somatic anxiety penetrates both the body and mind of the learner, which causes a loss of focus and the capacity to perform a given task. This perturbation of attitude and behavior is uncontrollable and therefore acts as a response stimulus whenever a written task or requirement is presented (Cheng, 2004).

Correspondingly, Cheng (2004) asserts that avoidance behavior, being the third type of writing anxiety, alludes to the mental perception when a learner undergoes extreme tension and distress due to anxiety, which pushes them to eliminate the threat by avoiding and escaping the task that is given to them. This happens when students who are required to submit an English essay plan do not comply with the activity due to insufficient knowledge in utilizing the second language or L2; hence, they prefer to use the L1 in accomplishing the task.

Delving into understanding this matter, Zhang (2011) contends that among the three classifications of writing anxiety, the most frequent and recurrent kind of anxiety is cognitive. Furthermore, the study is focused on the level of anxiety of freshmen and sophomore Chinese students. The study yielded significant results that indicated that 83% of the students coming from freshmen and 76% of sophomore students suffer from heightened levels of cognitive anxiety in comparison to somatic and avoidance behavior anxiety, which are opposites.

It is evident that these types of anxiety continue to wreak havoc and plague students' learning due to these psychological disturbances. It is therefore proven that anxiety causes major breakdowns in the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains of learners; hence, to address the anxiety issue with writing, further research should be conducted.

3.4. Causes of writing anxiety

As anxiety has become an issue in the educational system that needs to be addressed, research corresponding to causes or factors of writing anxiety has grown exponentially and has been a center of interest among scholars, researchers, and linguists in the modern era.

Multiple studies indicate that anxiety has several factors that lead to the disruption and disturbance of student learning. Among the main factors causing anxiousness in the classroom is having low self-esteem. A person who does not have any skill or proficiency to justify and defend their principles and insights, often results in being unresponsive to activities and tasks that correlate with written communication (Rezaei and Jafari, 2014). Moreover, Horwitz (2001) supports the claim that low self-confidence yields minimal to no participation in tasks and assignments.

Similarly, Zhang (2019) discovered that students constantly experience anxiety due to the fear of receiving adverse feedback from their teachers and not being able to meet the teacher's standards and expectations. This often results in low motivation for students to comply with activities that involve any form of written communication. Additionally, Kirmizi and Kirmizi (2015) and Tuan (2010) assert that when students have not fully grasped the English language, they will have trouble conceptualizing and

deliberating their ideas to construct output using the English language. With that being stated, anxiety starts to form and cloud the mind of the learner, resulting in the state of being reluctant to write anything that would involve the utilization of the English language. In this aspect, a student's inability to write well in their second language or L2 is the primary cause of anxiety among learners when they are subjected to writing. As most of the output and requirements being integrated in schools and universities are in the English language, students would feel concerned about their submissions since they acknowledge their lack of comprehension and expertise on the L2 (Cheng, 2004).

3.5. Nonlanguage majors on writing anxiety

Writing is an indispensable skill that a student must gain proficiency in to achieve success and academic merit. However, as the educational system continues to utilize the medium of instruction, which is English, along with the activities and tasks associated with it, students who are enrolled in nonlanguage major courses are entirely affected. According to Cheng (2002), writing anxiety proliferates in nonlanguage majors, as they are not exposed and do not integrate language lessons primarily into their subjects. This results in unwanted writing anxiety inside the classroom that could potentially impede the cognitive learning of students.

On the same account, Cheng (2002) asserts that writing anxiety continues to proliferate among the ranks of nonlanguage majors because students who are currently enrolled in nonlanguage courses prefer to use their first language or L1 rather than L2. Rashid (2022), Sparks and Patton (2013), and Woodrow (2006) supported this study, highlighting that nonlanguage majors have seen that the English language is crucial as a means of communicating and deliberating their thoughts and opinions but do not view it as a necessity that needs constant practice and integration.

A study conducted by Krashen (1982) signifies that nonlanguage majors tend to have negative views and perceptions of the English language; they do not distinguish the application of the L2 in their courses as a pivotal matter that would have a significant effect on their academic status and professional condition.

Contrary to most studies which highlight the disinterest of nonlanguage major students toward English language, Fernandez et al. (2023) reported that prospective teachers taking nonlanguage majors, specifically those specializing in Mathematics and Science and are enrolled to English courses, revealed that the mentioned respondents demonstrate a positive attitude toward English as medium of instruction. Regardless, it will not be a sufficient reason to negate the fact that most investigation still adhere to nonlanguage majors experiencing anxiety when faced with writing tasks.

Based on the study by Min and Rahmat (2014), compared students majoring in languages, nonlanguage majors, particularly engineering students, experience between low and high degrees of anxiety in terms of writing. The study presented a classification of writing anxiety, namely, cognitive anxiety, somatic anxiety, and avoidance behavior anxiety. Pertaining to the study's findings, somatic anxiety was proven to be the main source of anxiety among engineering students (M: 3.2304; SD: 0.78530), followed by cognitive anxiety (M: 2.8777; SD: 0.43924) and avoidance behavior anxiety (M: 3.0614; SD: 0.46501), which suggests that most of the undergraduate engineering students at University Putra Malaysia have experienced writing anxiety.

Additionally, Rabadi and Rabadi (2020) found that students taking a medical course reported feeling extremely anxious when writing. In contrast with Min and Rahmat (2014), the investigation discovered that cognitive anxiety is the dominant form of anxiety experienced by the participants. Moreover, the

research reveals that language complications, a lack of writing experience, low self-esteem, and dread of writing-intensive tests are the main contributors to writing anxiety among the participants.

By analyzing the data, it is significantly clear that both studies mentioned regarding writing anxiety in nonlanguage majors have arrived at different yet related results concerning which type of writing anxiety has been the most prevalent; therefore, writing anxiety among nonlanguage majors is not determined and constant, but it substantially differs from one study to the other. Furthermore, the cited studies conclude that writing anxiety is indeed a pressing issue among students that needs to be addressed in a timely manner. In that way, students who suffer from tension and distress would be able to minimize and diminish its effects. To put it into perspective, studies on writing anxiety among nonlanguage majors are indeed lacking and in need of support; this current investigation will shed light on those who are struggling with anxiety in the hopes of at least lessening its unfavorable impacts on students, particularly those who are prospective educators.

4. Methodology

4.1. Research design

The research study uses a descriptive quantitative cross-sectional analysis as its design. This research investigation is directed at finding the levels, types, and causes of writing anxiety among prospective nonlanguage major educators along with discovering whether writing anxiety significantly differs when viewed across the respondents' majors.

The current study gathered data from a group of respondents in a short span of time utilizing a survey questionnaire; hence, it is cross-sectional (Setia, 2016; Perez and Alieto, 2018). Similarly, it is descriptive since the objective is to describe the nature of individuals, the occurrence, or circumstances by examining them. Thus, the researcher opted not to utilize the given variables but decided to only provide crucial descriptions of the specific sample and/or variable (Kothari, 2004).

In parallel, quantitative design is utilized since a phenomenon or phenomena is quantified in the study, in this case, the levels, types, and causes of writing anxiety (Kothari, 2004; Ricohermoso et al., 2019).

On the same ground, no intervention or manipulation is used in the current investigation, which is categorized as nonexperimental because no comparison groups were developed, and only the variables involved were described (Torres and Alieto, 2019a; Torres and Alieto, 2019b).

4.2. Respondents

The research investigation employed probability sampling, specifically cluster sampling, in choosing the participants. With prospective teachers who are enrolled in the current semester taking up nonlanguage majors as the whole sample with the common criteria of taking up nonlanguage specializations, the researcher randomly chooses three subgroups, namely, Bachelor of Secondary Education Major in Mathematics (BSED Math), Bachelor of Culture and Arts Education (BCAED), and Bachelor of Special Needs Education (BSNED). Overall, 200 students were contacted; however, there were only 165 participants (82.50% response rate) who agreed to be a participant in the study, resulting in a total number of participants. Additionally, for each nonlanguage specialization, there are 55 respondents; hence, in terms of data frequency, the participants are equally distributed when viewed according to the nonlanguage specialization they are taking.

4.3. Instrument

To identify the levels, types, and causes of writing anxiety among prospective nonlanguage teachers in this research study, the data were acquired by distributing two questionnaires that were both closed-ended. Both questionnaires have no changes; hence, they were fully adapted; the first is from Cheng (2004), namely, the Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI), and the second is from Younas et al. (2014), which is the Causes of Writing Anxiety Inventory (CWAI).

Testing the reliability of the research instruments requires inputting the results of the 22-item Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) and the 10-item Causes of Writing Anxiety Inventory (CWAI) into statistical software. The 22-item SLWAI, the first research questionnaire maneuvered in this study, rendered a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.757 with good internal consistency for interpretation. This validity is supported by different studies that have also adopted the same instrument, such as Arindra and Ardi (2020), Asmari (2013), Hussin et al. (2015), Kirmizi and Kirmizi (2015), Mulyono et al. (2020), Rezaei and Jafari (2014), Sabti et al. (2019), and Zhang (2011). On the other hand, the 10-item CWAI has a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.936 with excellent internal consistency.

The SLWAI contains 22 items, while the CWAI has 10 items. Furthermore, both questionnaires utilized the "5-point Likert scale", which corresponds to the following: "1=Strongly Disagree"; "2=Disagree"; "3=Neither agree nor disagree"; "4=Agree" and "5=Strongly Agree". Moreover, an equal interval is observed when the scale is computed for interpretation, hence the following: "1.00–1.79 (Strongly Disagree)"; "1.80–2.59 (Disagree)"; "2.60–3.39 (Neither agree nor disagree)"; "3.40–4.19 (Agree)" and "4.20–4.99 (Strongly Agree)".

4.4. Data gathering procedure

Once the respondents were finalized, the research questionnaires used in this study were input into a Google form. Online data gathering is administered through the form's accessible link, which is sent and forwarded to the target participants. Aside from the demographic profile, which comprises their courses and year levels along with their responses to the given questionnaires, no additional information was collected from the participants. On the same note, each respondent is contacted through Facebook messenger, highlighting that their participation is voluntary; hence, no merit or demerit will be given when they opt to participate or not be involved in the study, respectively.

4.5. Coding procedure

The gathered data were downloaded directly from the results of the Google Forms, which were transferred to SPSS to be treated and analyzed. The data were divided into two groups, SLWAI results, and CWAI findings, both of which were coded.

To classify the data for the SLWAI results, three different types of anxiety were considered: cognitive anxiety, somatic anxiety, and avoidance behavior. The 8 items that were examined for cognitive anxiety were items "1, 3, 7, 9, 14, 17, 20, and 21". For somatic anxiety, the 7 items analyzed were items "2, 6, 8, 11, 13, 15, and 19". For the third type, avoidance behavior, the 7 items were items "4, 5, 10, 12, 16, 18, and 22". Additionally, items "1, 4, 8, 17, 18, 21, and 22" were coded reversely, e.g., if the participant selected "strongly disagree" on the items specified, the SPSS value scale that needed to be entered was 5, and vice versa. The sums of the Likert scale for each item were added and divided by the number of items that the subgroup contained, e.g., sum of Likert scale divided by 8 for cognitive anxiety, 7 for somatic anxiety, and 7 for avoidance behavior.

To calculate the CWAI results, the data are measured by adding each item’s Likert score (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10) divided by the number of items, which is 10.

4.6. Statistical treatments

To arrive at a logical conclusion and be able to test the hypotheses of this study, statistical treatments should be relevant. The data were treated utilizing Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25, a software program used by researchers for analysis of complex quantitative data, which is based on the level of second language writing anxiety and its types, which comprise cognitive anxiety, somatic anxiety, and avoidance behavior. Furthermore, causes of writing anxiety inventory results were also treated in descriptive statistics.

To test the normality of the distribution of data, the Shapiro-Wilk test was utilized. Since the *p*-values generated for this study are greater than the alpha level, which is 0.05 and therefore nonsignificant, the data are normally distributed. This further indicates that parametric statistics are suitable for use Singh (2006).

Furthermore, writing anxiety levels, types, and causes were analyzed across their nonlanguage major courses; thus, the significant difference or *p*-value was identified utilizing the statistical technique called one-way analysis of variance (one-way ANOVA).

5. Results and discussion

The ultimate objective of this inquiry is to identify the levels, types, and causes of anxiety when prospective nonlanguage major teachers are prompted to write. With this aim, the researcher analyzes the data of the study by utilizing descriptive statistics to identify the levels, types, and causes of writing anxiety, whereas inferential statistics such as one-way ANOVA are used to arrive at the result for significant differences in the types and causes of anxiety in writing across the respondents’ nonlanguage major specialization.

5.1. Level of anxiety in writing among prospective nonlanguage teachers

As delineated in **Table 1**, the respondents in this study manifested a pronounced propensity toward experiencing heightened levels of anxiety when confronted with writing tasks, as indicated by a calculated mean score of 66.28. This numerical representation of anxiety levels is consistent with the framework presented by Cheng (2004), wherein survey scores fall within the range of 22 to 110. The categorization of anxiety levels, as informed by extant literature, further substantiates the findings of this investigation. It is established that a mean score below 50 is indicative of low-level anxiety, while scores between 51 and 65 denote a moderate level of anxiety. In stark contrast, the mean score of 66.28 obtained in this study unequivocally situates the participants within the realm of high-level anxiety. This outcome underscores the susceptibility of nonlanguage prospective educators to anxiety when tasked with writing endeavors.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of the overall writing anxiety level.

Anxiety	N	Sum	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
Cognitive	165	4243	25.72	3.295	-
Somatic	165	3366	20.40	5.508	
Avoidance behavior	165	3325	20.16	2.978	
Total	-	-	66.28	-	High-level anxiety

It is noteworthy, however, that the elevated levels of anxiety observed in this study do not necessarily imply a dearth of exposure to English writing among the respondents. Rather, it underscores the incontrovertible reality that irrespective of their academic pursuits, writing necessitates a mastery of language and linguistic competence. The act of composing in English demands a level of linguistic dexterity that is not solely contingent upon majoring in language-oriented disciplines. Thus, it is imperative to recognize the multifaceted nature of writing apprehension that permeates the academic landscape.

Furthermore, it is imperative to acknowledge that the findings of this study align harmoniously with a corpus of prior research. An array of studies conducted by Jebreil et al. (2015), Rezaei and Jafari (2014), Wahyuni and Umam (2017), as well as Wern and Rahmat (2021) have collectively evidenced a recurrent trend, wherein a preponderance of respondents consistently reports experiencing high-level writing anxiety. These scholarly works corroborate the notion that the phenomenon of heightened writing anxiety is not unique to this investigation but rather a recurrent theme within the broader academic context. Such convergence of findings across disparate studies serves to reinforce the salience and universality of this issue within the realm of writing pedagogy and warrants further scholarly attention.

5.2. Type of writing anxiety among prospective nonlanguage teachers

As discerned from the tabular representation in **Table 2**, a notable pattern emerges regarding the prevalence of different types of anxiety in writing among the respondents. Specifically, cognitive anxiety attains the highest mean score ($M = 25.72$), indicating its preeminent presence, followed by somatic anxiety ($M = 20.40$) and avoidance behavior ($M = 20.16$). This observation underscores the prominence of cognitive anxiety among the participants, signifying a prevailing sense of unease stemming from their awareness that their written work is subject to evaluation, feedback, and potential criticism.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of the overall writing anxiety type.

Anxiety	Mean
Cognitive	25.72
Somatic	20.40
Avoidance behavior	20.16

This identified predominance of cognitive anxiety aligns coherently with the findings of Rezaei and Jafari (2014), whose investigation similarly identified cognitive anxiety as the predominant form of anxiety experienced by respondents in the context of writing. Furthermore, this congruence in results is corroborated by the research conducted by Nugroho and Ena (2021), Rabadi and Rabadi (2020), and Zhang (2011), all of which independently yielded analogous outcomes, affirming the preeminent role of cognitive anxiety in the writing process. On the contrary, the study of Min and Rahmat (2014) revealed that among nonlanguage students who are specifically taking engineering courses, somatic anxiety was hailed as the main source of the respondents' apprehension in writing.

The prevalence of cognitive anxiety underscores the substantial impact that the evaluative dimension of writing has on individuals, irrespective of their academic backgrounds or specific writing contexts. It highlights the need for pedagogical strategies and support mechanisms that address and alleviate cognitive anxiety, as it appears to be a common and salient aspect of the writing experience shared by students and writers across different studies and settings. These consistent findings underscore the universality of this phenomenon and the imperative for educators and researchers to consider cognitive anxiety as a focal point in the study and amelioration of writing apprehension.

Table 3 presents a comprehensive overview of the descriptive findings pertaining to cognitive anxiety, which emerges as the predominant form of anxiety among the respondents, substantiated by a notable mean score of ($M = 25.72$). Within this category, the analysis further delves into the examination of eight distinct items, revealing specific nuances within cognitive anxiety experiences. Notably, item 9 commands the highest mean score ($M = 3.60$), closely trailed by item 3 ($M=3.54$), and items 1 and 14, which share identical mean scores ($M = 3.37$).

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of cognitive anxiety.

Item	N	Sum	Mean
1	165	556	3.37
3	165	584	3.54
7	165	468	2.84
9	165	594	3.60
14	165	556	3.37
17	165	501	3.04
20	165	542	3.28
21	165	442	2.68
Total			25.72

The preeminence of item 9 ($M = 3.60$) underscores a significant source of apprehension among the respondents. This particular item pertains to the respondents' apprehension when they become cognizant that their written output is subject to evaluation. The discerned worry centers on the anticipation of receiving a subpar grade for their work, reflecting an acute concern over academic performance and its potential consequences.

Concurrently, item 3 ($M = 3.54$) emerges as another focal point of cognitive anxiety, revealing that respondents experience heightened nervousness when tasked with the act of writing in the English language. This apprehension suggests a certain level of unease or discomfort associated with the writing process itself, potentially influenced by language proficiency concerns.

Moreover, items 1 and 14 share equivalent mean scores ($M = 3.37$) and present parallel insights into the cognitive anxiety experienced by the participants. These items revolve around the respondents' anxiety stemming from the prospect of their peers reviewing and evaluating their written work. This anxiety reflects concerns about peer perceptions, potential criticism, and the social dimension of writing.

The detailed examination of cognitive anxiety within this study's findings underscores specific facets of anxiety experiences that resonate with the broader discourse on writing apprehension. The prevalence of cognitive anxiety suggests the need for targeted interventions and support mechanisms that address these concerns related to evaluation, language proficiency, and social dimensions in the context of writing. These findings also concur with the broader literature on writing anxiety, emphasizing the significance of cognitive anxiety as a central aspect of the writing experience for students and writers alike.

Table 4 provides an intricate overview of the descriptive analysis outcomes concerning somatic anxiety, which emerges as the second most prevalent form of anxiety among the surveyed respondents, characterized by a mean score of ($M = 20.40$). Within this category, the analysis extends to explore seven distinct items, revealing nuanced aspects of somatic anxiety experiences. Notably, item 2 commands the highest mean score ($M = 3.28$), closely followed by item 11 ($M = 3.24$), and item 8 ($M = 3.15$).

Item 2, with its highest mean score of ($M = 3.28$), signifies a prominent source of somatic anxiety among the respondents. This particular item pertains to the respondents' experiences of physiological and emotional manifestations when tasked with writing. The heightened heart rate or "heart-pounding" and the perception of thoughts becoming "jumbled" during writing under time constraints are indicative of the physiological and mental aspects of anxiety experienced in this context.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics of somatic anxiety.

Item	N	Sum	Mean
2	165	541	3.28
6	165	428	2.59
8	165	520	3.15
11	165	534	3.24
13	165	504	3.05
15	165	424	2.57
19	165	415	2.52
Total			20.40

Concurrently, item 11 ($M = 3.24$) stands as another focal point of somatic anxiety, underscoring the respondents' experiences of physiological symptoms while engaging in writing activities. This item suggests that respondents encounter physiological responses such as sweating and trembling, further illustrating the bodily and emotional dimensions of anxiety that are associated with the act of writing.

Furthermore, item 8 ($M = 3.15$) provides additional insights into the somatic anxiety experienced by the participants. It aligns with the broader theme of physiological symptoms and underscores the physical and emotional responses elicited when writing tasks are conducted under time constraints. This item highlights the salient role of time pressure as a contributing factor to somatic anxiety during writing.

The comprehensive examination of somatic anxiety within this study's findings elucidates specific facets of physiological and emotional manifestations experienced by respondents during the writing process. These findings underscore the multifaceted nature of somatic anxiety, wherein physiological responses, emotional turmoil, and time-related stressors collectively contribute to the overall somatic anxiety experienced by individuals when tasked with writing. This analysis further aligns with the existing body of literature on writing anxiety, emphasizing the significance of somatic anxiety as a substantial component of the writing apprehension spectrum.

Table 5 provides an insightful exposition of the descriptive analysis outcomes, focusing on avoidance behavior anxiety as the third distinct category within the questionnaire. It is discernible from the table that avoidance behavior anxiety emerges as the least prevalent type of anxiety experienced by the study's participants, as indicated by its mean score of 20.16. Within this category, an exploration of seven specific items reveals nuanced aspects of avoidance behavior anxiety experiences. Notably, item 4 commands the highest mean score ($M = 3.72$), followed by item 22 ($M = 3.64$), and item 18 ($M = 3.25$).

Item 4, boasting the highest mean score of ($M = 3.72$), constitutes a pivotal source of avoidance behavior anxiety among the respondents. This particular item underscores the respondents' inclination to experience significant anxiety and tension when faced with writing tasks, leading to a pronounced desire to avoid or escape these tasks. The resonance of this item suggests a noteworthy pattern wherein avoidance is the preferred response mechanism when confronted with writing-related apprehensions.

Table 5. Descriptive statistics of avoidance behavior.

Item	N	Sum	Mean
4	165	613	3.72
5	165	411	2.49
10	165	406	2.46
12	165	422	2.56
16	165	336	2.04
18	165	537	3.25
22	165	600	3.64
Total			20.16

Furthermore, item 22 ($M = 3.64$) emerges as another salient aspect of avoidance behavior anxiety. This item suggests that respondents may exhibit avoidance behaviors by opting for an alternative language as their medium of writing, rather than employing English. Such a choice reflects an avoidance strategy that circumvents the perceived challenges associated with writing in English, even among nonlanguage major prospective teachers.

Item 18 ($M = 3.25$) provides supplementary insights into avoidance behavior anxiety experiences, signifying respondents' inclination to resort to avoidance or evasion as a coping mechanism when confronted with the task of writing. The manifestation of this behavior, albeit less pronounced than in item 4, reaffirms the relevance of avoidance behavior anxiety within the context of writing for nonlanguage major prospective teachers.

The comprehensive examination of avoidance behavior anxiety within this study's findings elucidates specific dimensions of avoidance tendencies adopted by respondents when faced with writing tasks. Despite being the least prevalent type of anxiety among the participants, avoidance behavior anxiety remains germane to the writing experiences of nonlanguage major prospective teachers. It reveals a notable inclination among respondents to opt for avoidance and alternative language choices, which, while seemingly justified by their nonlanguage specialization, raises considerations regarding the mastery of the English language, particularly in their role as prospective teachers where proficiency in English is essential. These findings contribute to our understanding of how avoidance behaviors may manifest in the context of writing apprehension among nonlanguage major students preparing for a teaching career.

5.3. Cause of writing anxiety in prospective nonlanguage teachers

This study not only aims to identify writing anxiety levels and types but also intends to determine the causes of anxiety when prospective nonlanguage teachers are subjected to writing. **Table 6** below presents the descriptive statistics of the causes of writing anxiety among the respondents.

As displayed in the table above, the two major causes of writing anxiety that the respondents experienced were writing under time constraints ($M = 3.55$) and pressure to produce a perfect writing composition ($M=3.50$). Time pressure as the prime cause of anxiety in writing coincides with the findings of Rahim et al. (2016). However, some studies contradict that of Wahyuni et al. (2019) and Quvanch and Na (2022), who discovered that linguistic difficulties are the major cause of writing anxiety. On the other hand, Rezaei and Jafari (2014) along with Alfiansyah et al. (2017) claimed that it is the teacher's negative comments that prompt apprehension in writing.

Based on items 6 and 7, being the leading causes of writing anxiety, the respondents agreed that these are the main reasons why they become anxious when asked to produce a writing composition with English as the medium. It could be inferred that prospective nonlanguage major teachers find writing a taxing task since they need more time to produce an error-free composition.

Table 6. Descriptive statistics of writing anxiety cause.

No.	Item	Min	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
1	I feel fear if my compositions would get lecturer's negative comments and evaluation.	1	5	3.37	1.072	N
2	I feel anxious due to insufficient writing practice in English.	1	5	3.27	1.025	N
3	I feel anxious due to insufficient writing techniques in English.	1	5	3.33	0.983	N
4	I feel anxious due to the problem with the topic given.	1	5	3.17	0.998	N
5	I feel anxious due to linguistic difficulties, such as lack of mastery of grammar, diction, and vocabulary.	1	5	3.32	1.041	N
6	I feel anxious due to the pressure of writing English composition perfectly.	1	5	3.50	0.985	A
7	I feel anxious due to time pressure.	1	5	3.55	1.002	A
8	I feel anxious due to lack of self-confidence when I write English compositions.	1	5	3.32	1.103	N
9	I feel anxious because I have to write the compositions in English when exams, such as quizzes, middle exams, and final exams.	1	5	2.79	1.107	N
10	I feel anxious due to a lot of assignments I had to write in English.	1	5	2.76	1.094	N

Scale: 1.00–1.79: Strongly Disagree (SD); 1.80–2.59: Disagree (D); 2.60–3.39: Neither agree nor disagree (N); 3.40–4.19: Agree(A) and 4.20–4.99: Strongly Agree (SA). N = 165.

In parallel, aside from the two major causes of anxiety in writing as experienced by the respondents, fear of the teacher's negative feedback with a mean score ($M = 3.37$) is also an affecting factor. It can be noted that respondents became anxious since the negative comments from their mentors led them to an agitating situation.

Correspondingly, the result also provides other causes of writing anxiety that the respondents faced. These include the following: insufficient writing approach in English with a mean score ($M = 3.33$), not being proficient in grammar, diction, and vocabulary along with the feeling of insecurity when creating English compositions, both having similar mean scores ($M = 3.32$). On a similar note, these reasons are followed by inadequate English writing experience with a mean score ($M = 3.27$) and worrying about the issue with the suggested topic ($M = 3.17$). The results further indicate that prospective teachers specializing in nonlanguage subjects lack knowledge and skills in the English language in general. The scarcity of mastery of techniques and writing experience combined with the unfamiliarity of the writing topic led the respondents to feel anxious and thus unable to complete the writing composition.

Noticeably, although gaining the least among the 10 causes of writing anxiety as reflected in the mean score, these two elements continue to influence how people feel when they write. These are the following: exams that require writing in English ($M = 2.79$) and many English-language assignments to complete ($M = 2.76$). The result suggests that when writing is posted as a requirement, prospective nonlanguage major teachers tend to become anxious because they think that it may steer unfavorable results.

5.4. Type of writing anxiety across major of prospective nonlanguage teachers

To determine whether the type of writing anxiety experienced by the respondents significantly differed when classified according to their nonlanguage specializations, the data were treated using a one-way ANOVA statistical tool. The results are displayed in **Table 7**, which follows.

Table 7. One-way ANOVA results for writing anxiety across majors.

Variables		<i>p</i> -value	Interpretation
Independent variable	Dependent Variable		
Cognitive anxiety	Majors	0.639	Not significant
Somatic anxiety		0.290	Not significant
Avoidance behavior		0.979	Not significant

The results yielded no significant difference when responses were categorized based on their nonlanguage specialization. This denotes that the type of anxiety in writing that the respondents experience is unaffected by their major. Moreover, this outcome implies that the nature and intensity of anxiety experienced by the respondents in the context of writing tasks remained consistent irrespective of their chosen academic majors. In other words, the specific nonlanguage disciplines in which the respondents were enrolled did not emerge as influential factors in shaping their feelings of anxiety when confronted with writing-related assignments or subject matter.

5.5. Causes of writing anxiety across major of prospective nonlanguage teachers

The data were also statistically analyzed to determine whether the nonlanguage subjects that the respondents took influenced the causes of writing anxiety they experienced. To arrive at this conclusion, the data were examined using a statistical tool called one way-ANOVA. The outcome is presented in **Table 8** below.

Table 8. One-way ANOVA results for writing anxiety causes across majors.

No.	Variables		<i>p</i> -value	Interpretation
-	Independent variable	Dependent variable		
-	Causes of Writing Anxiety	-		
1	Lecturer's negative feedbacks	Majors	0.256	Not significant
2	Insufficient writing practice in English		0.071	Not significant
3	Insufficient English writing techniques		0.087	Not significant
4	Problem with the topic given		0.537	Not significant
5	Linguistic difficulties		0.701	Not significant
6	Pressure of perfect English composition		0.500	Not significant
7	Time pressure		0.338	Not significant
8	Lack of self-confidence when writing English compositions		0.374	Not significant
9	Fear of exams that include writing		0.536	Not significant
10	High frequency of English written assignments		0.570	Not significant

As delineated in the tabulated data, wherein responses have been meticulously organized according to the academic majors of the participants, a conspicuous observation emerges there is a notable absence of statistically significant disparities concerning the determinants of anxiety during the process of writing.

To expound further, this observation serves as compelling evidence that the choice of non-language-related majors by the surveyed individuals does not wield any observable or consequential impact on the core reasons underlying their anxiety when confronted with the obligation to craft written compositions in the English language.

This finding underscores the notion that the academic discipline or major pursued by students does not substantially shape or differentiate the sources of anxiety encountered in the context of writing. It suggests a degree of universality in the challenges and apprehensions experienced by students across diverse fields of study when engaged in the act of English composition.

As a result, this discovery carries several implications. First, it suggests that educational institutions should adopt a more inclusive and holistic approach when addressing writing-related anxiety, as it appears to be a shared concern regardless of major. Second, it calls for the development of support services and pedagogical strategies that can benefit all students, irrespective of their academic disciplines. Finally, it encourages interdisciplinary collaboration among educators and researchers to formulate comprehensive strategies for mitigating writing anxiety, recognizing it as a common challenge in higher education.

6. Conclusion and recommendations

This study delves into the nuanced realm of writing anxiety, a facet of language proficiency and pedagogy that bears considerable significance. It is imperative to underscore the pivotal role of writing as an essential skill within the purview of language acquisition. This inquiry has been dedicated to the meticulous examination of writing anxiety among aspiring educators who specialize in nonlanguage majors. The salient aspects of this investigation encompass an evaluation of the overall intensity of this anxiety, its various typologies, and the fundamental underpinnings that precipitate it.

The findings unveiled by this study resonate with clarity: prospective teachers enrolled in nonlanguage majors consistently grapple with heightened levels of anxiety when tasked with writing assignments. This revelation carries a sense of urgency that extends beyond mere classification. The participants in this study, though not primarily focused on English language acquisition, are future educators poised to impart knowledge to their own students, including the art of writing. Therefore, the manifestation of heightened writing anxiety within this cohort carries profound implications, not solely for their own academic performance but also for the efficacy of their future pedagogical endeavors.

Consequently, it is incumbent upon educators and institutions to intensify efforts in the instruction of English writing techniques within the classroom. This entails a multifaceted approach that encompasses not only the transmission of writing skills and mechanics but also the cultivation of an environment conducive to assuaging student anxiety and bolstering the efficacy of instructional strategies.

The study further illuminates that cognitive anxiety looms as the predominant strain of writing-related apprehension, as gleaned from the participants' responses. This manifestation underscores a sense of trepidation and unease that emanates from the awareness that one's written work is subject to critical evaluation. In light of this revelation, it is incumbent upon educators to discern the multifaceted nature of their students' needs. Beyond mere instruction in the mechanics of writing, students necessitate support in selecting appropriate writing topics. The anxiety stemming from the uncertainty of how to initiate a composition serves to complicate the writing process further. Moreover, the stress that students undergo during the act of writing can be traced back to the causal factors identified within this study—namely, time constraints and the aspiration to produce flawless compositions.

Therefore, educators are tasked with the responsibility of allocating adequate time for writing tasks, recognizing that stringent deadlines exacerbate student anxiety, ultimately yielding suboptimal outcomes. Furthermore, it is imperative to emphasize the iterative nature of the writing process, underscoring that the crafting of a flawless piece demands consistent practice.

Furthermore, when the responses were scrutinized through the lens of the participants' nonlanguage majors (BSED Math, BCAED, and BSNEED), the discernment emerged that there exists no statistically significant difference in terms of the types of writing anxiety experienced or the underlying causal factors. This revelation underscores a pivotal point in the realm of language instruction—that writing ought not to be relegated to the periphery, regardless of whether students boast expertise in the English language or are ensconced within the domain of nonlanguage fields.

In light of the outcomes gleaned from this research, this study serves as a clarion call for further exploration, inviting inquiries into a plethora of nonlanguage specializations among prospective educators. Future investigations might consider additional variables that could exert an influence on writing anxiety, such as gender and grade level, thereby enriching our comprehension of this multifaceted phenomenon. The expansion of sample size, offering a broader cohort of participants, would undoubtedly furnish deeper insights into the intricate tapestry of writing anxiety. Furthermore, it is imperative to acknowledge that this study is geographically bound to a nonmetropolitan state university, hence, the prospects of investigating different geographical and cultural contexts hold the promise of broadening our understanding of writing anxiety. Lastly, subsequent analyses might proffer a compendium of strategies aimed at counteracting the deleterious impacts of writing anxiety, thus contributing substantively to the scholarship in this domain.

In essence, this study serves as an incipient step toward comprehending and addressing the multifaceted challenge of writing anxiety within the ambit of language education, calling for continued exploration and innovation in the pedagogical domain.

Author contributions

Conceptualization, TMDL and EA; methodology, AC; software, TMDL; validation, KAL, HL and EA; formal analysis, CP; investigation, TMDL; resources, JS; data curation, KAL and HL; writing—original draft preparation, TMDL; writing—review and editing, AC; visualization, JS; supervision, EA; project administration, CP; funding acquisition, JS, AC, HL, KAL, CP and EA. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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