Writing Self-Efficacy among EFL Students: The Role of Teachers' Motivational Practices in Indonesian Higher Education

Muh Tahir[1], Munir[2], Umi Nurul Fahri[3]
Makassar State University[1,2,3]
Corresponding E-mail: muhammadtahir@unm.ac.id

Abstract

This study investigates how English lecturers' motivational strategies influence students' self-efficacy in academic writing. Employing a sequential exploratory mixed-methods design (QUAL → quan), the research consisted of two phases: a qualitative inquiry involving semi-structured interviews with three lecturers, followed by a quantitative survey distributed to 30 undergraduate EFL students. The qualitative findings revealed the implementation of motivational practices such as goal-setting, scaffolding, autonomy support, reinforcement, constructive feedback, and classroom climate. Students perceived these strategies as fostering greater writing confidence. A simple linear regression analysis confirmed a significant positive influence of teacher motivational strategies on students' writing self-efficacy ($R = 0.511$, $R^2 = 0.261$, $B = 0.320$, $p = 0.004$). These results underscore the pedagogical importance of strategically designed motivational interventions in enhancing EFL learners' self-belief and performance in academic writing. The study highlights the need for professional development programs to equip educators with evidence-based motivational teaching tools.

Keywords: *motivational strategies, self-efficacy, EFL writing, teacher practices, mixed-methods research*

Introduction

Writing in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) settings poses a unique set of challenges for students, requiring not only linguistic proficiency but also substantial cognitive and affective engagement. Among the psychological constructs that significantly influence students' writing success is self-efficacy the belief in one's capability to organize and execute tasks necessary for specific outcomes (Bandura, 1997).

In the domain of academic writing, students with high self-efficacy are more likely to persist through difficulties, adopt effective strategies, and maintain confidence despite setbacks.

However, the development of such beliefs is not solely intrinsic; it is highly influenced by external classroom factors, particularly the motivational strategies employed by educators (Dörnyei, 2001; Deci & Ryan, 1985).

Recent studies have highlighted the importance of teacher support and classroom practices in fostering students' motivation and confidence in writing (Teng, 2016; Rahimi & Fathi, 2022; Putri et al., 2021). Motivational practices such as goal-setting, feedback, autonomy support, and scaffolding have been associated with increased learner engagement and improved academic outcomes. However, much of the existing research has been conducted in Western or East Asian contexts, leaving a notable gap in the understanding of how such strategies operate within Indonesian higher education. Furthermore, most studies focus on general language skills, while the specific interplay between teacher motivation and students' self-efficacy in academic writing remains underexplored.

This gap is particularly relevant in the Indonesian context, where writing instruction in tertiary EFL classrooms is often constrained by limited instructional time, large class sizes, and varied student proficiency levels. The absence of sustained, motivationally-informed writing pedagogy may hinder students from developing confidence in their writing abilities. Although several national studies have examined learner autonomy or feedback practices (Suparman, 2021; Utami et al., 2023), few have empirically investigated how integrated motivational strategies shape students' writing self-efficacy in a comprehensive manner.

1. In response to this gap, this study addresses the following research questions:
   How do EFL lecturers implement motivational strategies in academic writing classes**?**
2. How do students perceive the influence of these motivational strategies on their writing experience?
3. To what extent do teachers' motivational strategies influence students' write self-efficacy?

Accordingly, the main objectives of this research are to explore the implementation of teacher motivational strategies in EFL writing instruction, examine students' perceptions of these strategies, and analyze their influence on students' writing self-efficacy. The novelty of this study lies in its dual-layered design, combining qualitative and quantitative methods to provide a robust understanding of how motivation-based pedagogy can enhance academic writing confidence in Indonesian higher education.

Method

This study employed a sequential exploratory mixed-methods design (QUAL → quan) to investigate the implementation and influence of teachers' motivational strategies on students' writing self-efficacy in an EFL context. This design was chosen to allow in-depth exploration of qualitative data as a basis for developing a quantitative instrument, thus ensuring that the research questions could be addressed both contextually and empirically.

The participants of this study consisted of two groups: three EFL writing lecturers and thirty undergraduate students enrolled in academic writing courses at UIN Palopo. The lecturers were selected purposively due to their experience and active involvement in teaching academic writing, while the student participants were recruited through convenience sampling, as they had been taught by the same lecturers involved in the qualitative phase. All participants provided informed consent, and ethical considerations were observed throughout the study.

Data collection was conducted in two stages. In the qualitative phase, semi-structured interviews were administered to the lecturers to explore the types of motivational strategies they used, including preparation and classroom application. The interviews were conducted in Bahasa Indonesia, recorded, transcribed verbatim, and analyzed thematically. The results of this phase informed the development of a student questionnaire used in the quantitative phase. The questionnaire contained 27 items: 12 items measured perceived teacher motivational strategies (e.g., goal-setting, scaffolding, feedback, autonomy support), and 15 items assessed students' self-efficacy in academic writing. Each item was measured using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The questionnaire underwent a pilot test to ensure clarity and internal consistency, and necessary adjustments were made prior to distribution.

Quantitative data were analyzed using simple linear regression with the help of SPSS software. This analysis aimed to examine the relationship between the independent variable (teacher motivational strategies) and the dependent variable (students' writing self-efficacy). Statistical outputs included the regression coefficient (B), significance value (p), correlation coefficient (R), and coefficient of determination (R^2), which together indicated the strength and significance of the relationship. Reliability of the instrument was tested using Cronbach's Alpha, and the results showed acceptable reliability values ($\alpha > 0.7$) for both constructs. This methodological approach ensured the data were collected systematically and analyzed appropriately to answer the research questions.

Result

The results of this study are derived from two phases of data collection: qualitative interviews with lecturers and a quantitative survey distributed to students. These findings are presented in a logical sequence, beginning with the implementation of motivational strategies, followed by students' perceptions, and

finally, the results of the statistical analysis that measured the relationship between teacher strategies and students' writing self-efficacy

The Implementation of Motivational Strategies

The interview findings revealed that lecturers consistently employed six core motivational strategies, each with specific functions to support student engagement and self-efficacy in writing. These strategies were not isolated actions, but part of a broader pedagogical mindset aimed at building students' confidence and independence in their writing tasks:

The implementation of goal-setting emerged as a foundational strategy in facilitating students' ability to conceptualize and internalize specific writing objectives, including but not limited to structural coherence, paragraph organization, and overall textual development. According to one lecturer, setting goals clarified expectations and motivated students to engage fully:

> *"I always start by setting clear goals with my students, so they know what they are working towards. It motivates them to write more seriously."*

Scaffolding was operationalized through the strategic use of outlining techniques, guided prompts, and step-by-step instructional support, particularly during the initial stages of the writing process. By breaking complex tasks into smaller, more navigable components, this approach not only enhanced students' task manageability but also mitigated cognitive overload and reduced affective barriers such as writing-related anxiety. As one lecturer described:

> *"When students feel stuck, I give them guiding questions. That way, they still do the work, but they don't feel overwhelmed."*

Autonomy support was enacted by granting students the flexibility to select writing topics that resonated with their personal interests, experiences, or academic inclinations. This instructional choice was intended to foster a sense of ownership and intrinsic motivation, aligning with self-determination theory, which posits that autonomy is a critical driver of sustained engagement and deeper learning. By involving students in decision-making processes related to content, the lecturer aimed to cultivate meaningful investment in the writing task and reduce resistance often associated with externally imposed assignments. This approach increased engagement and ownership over the writing task. A lecturer explained:

> *"I let students choose their own topics for assignments. That way, they feel more invested in their writing."*

Reinforcement was delivered through deliberate verbal praise and occasional public acknowledgment, strategically administered following observable student progress. This form of positive reinforcement functioned not merely as a reward mechanism, but as a means of sustaining motivation and validating students' efforts. By highlighting even incremental improvements, the lecturer sought to reinforce a growth-oriented mindset, encouraging continued engagement and persistence. Such affirmations served to normalize progress as a process rather than an outcome, thereby fostering resilience in the face of writing challenges. A lecturer shared:

> *"When I see students make improvements, I always acknowledge it. Recognition boosts their motivation."*

Constructive feedback focused on strengths before identifying weaknesses. This balance was intended to maintain morale while encouraging revision. A lecturer noted:

> *"I don't just correct errors—I tell them what they did well. It helps build their confidence."*

Finally, creation of a supportive classroom climate was instrumental in fostering an environment of psychological safety, wherein students felt secure to express their ideas, take intellectual risks, and engage authentically in the writing process. The lecturer intentionally emphasized mutual respect, open communication, and the normalization of error as part of learning, thereby cultivating a non-threatening space that encouraged participation and creativity. By reducing fear of judgment and promoting inclusive interaction, this affective dimension of the learning environment played a pivotal role in lowering affective filters and enhancing students' willingness to engage with writing tasks more confidently and independently

> *"We try to create a space where students feel safe to express their ideas without fear of being judged. It makes them more willing to take risks in writing."*

All six motivational strategies were not applied uniformly or mechanically, but rather implemented in a responsive and adaptive manner, tailored to the evolving needs of students and the specific demands of each stage in the writing process. This pedagogical flexibility underscored the lecturer's commitment to fostering a learning environment grounded in motivational attunement and relational trust, wherein instructional decisions were continually informed by students' affective states, performance readiness, and individual learning trajectories.

The overarching intent was to cultivate learner agency and confidence, positioning motivation not as a supplementary feature of instruction, but as a central mechanism for empowerment and sustained academic engagement.

Students' Perceptions of Motivational Strategies

The majority of students expressed appreciation for the motivational strategies employed by the lecturer, noting their positive impact on writing engagement and confidence. As one participant remarked:

"When the lecturer gave encouragement, I felt more confident to try new ideas in writing" "Getting clear instructions and feedback made me believe I could do better"

However, not all students responded uniformly to the lecturer's motivational strategies. A number of participants expressed critical perspectives**,** suggesting that while the strategies were generally helpful, certain aspects of their implementation created unintended emotional or cognitive barriers. For instance, several students noted that feedback sessions**,** although intended to be constructive, occasionally placed excessive emphasis on errors, which inadvertently heightened anxiety and reduced their willingness to submit further drafts. One student expressed this concern candidly

"Sometimes, when feedback focused too much on mistakes, it made me nervous about submitting my work"

Another student articulated a similar concern, emphasizing the need for clearer instructional scaffolds to accompany autonomous tasks

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.511[a]	.261	.235	2.393	.261	9.890	1	28	.004

a. Predictors: (Constant), TOTAL_X

"I appreciate the freedom to choose topics, but sometimes I wish there were more examples or models"

This spectrum of student perceptions underscores the multifaceted and context-dependent nature of teacher motivational strategies. While a substantial number of learners perceived these strategies as empowering—enhancing their engagement, confidence, and willingness to experiment in writing—others articulated concerns regarding the inconsistent or overly critical execution of such practices. These divergent viewpoints suggest that the effectiveness of motivational interventions is not solely determined by their presence, but by the degree to which they are implemented with sensitivity, clarity, and responsiveness to individual learner needs.

Influence on Writing Self-Efficacy

To determine the extent to which teacher motivational strategies influence students' writing self-efficacy, a simple linear regression analysis was conducted using SPSS version 26. The data were drawn from 30 undergraduate EFL students who responded to a structured questionnaire containing items on perceived motivational strategies and writing self-efficacy.

The regression analysis was conducted to determine whether teacher motivational strategies significantly predict students' self-efficacy in writing. The following subsections detail the model summary, ANOVA table, and coefficient interpretation.

Table 1. Model Summary

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.511a	.261	.235	2.393	.261	9.890	1	28	.004

b. Predictors: (Constant), TOTAL_X

Table 1. shows that the R value is 0.511, indicating a moderate positive correlation between the independent variable (*Teacher Motivational Strategies*) and the dependent variable (*Students' Self-Efficacy*). The R Square value of 0.261 means that approximately 26.1% of the variance in students' self-efficacy can be explained by teacher motivational strategies. The remaining 73.9% is likely influenced by other variables that were not included in this study.

Although the proportion of explained variance is not very high, in educational research, especially when studying psychological constructs like motivation and self-efficacy, an R^2 above 0.2 is considered meaningful. This suggests that teacher motivation strategies are an important, albeit not exclusive, factor in students' writing confidence.

Table 2. ANOVA Test

ANOVAa

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	56.632	1	56.632	9.890	.004b
	Residual	160.335	28	5.726		
	Total	216.967	29			

a. Dependent Variable: TOTAL_Y

b. Predictors: (Constant), TOTAL_X

Table 2 shows a significance value (p = 0.004 < 0.05), indicating that the regression model is statistically significant. This means that the regression model provides a better fit to the data than a model that does not include the independent variable, thereby confirming that teacher motivational strategies significantly influence students' self-efficacy.

Table 3. Regression coefficients

Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	45.169	4.620		9.776	.000					
	TOTAL_X	.320	.102	.511	3.145	.004	.511	.511	.511	1.000	1.000

a. Dependent Variable: TOTAL_Y

Table 3 shows that the regression coefficient (B = 0.320) indicates a positive effect of teacher motivational strategies on students' self-efficacy. This means that for every one-unit increase in the teacher motivational strategies score, the students' self-efficacy score is predicted to increase by 0.320 units. Furthermore,

the p-value of 0.004 indicates that this relationship is statistically significant, as it is below the 0.05 threshold. Therefore, teacher motivational strategies can be considered a significant and meaningful predictor of students' self-efficacy in writing.

The constant value (B = 45.169) suggests that when the motivational strategies score is zero, the average self-efficacy score would be 45.169. While this is a theoretical value, it provides a baseline for the regression equation: Self-Efficacy = 45.169 + 0.320(Motivational Strategies)

Discussion

The findings of this study offer compelling evidence that the implementation of motivational strategies by EFL lecturers plays a significant role in shaping students' writing self-efficacy. The qualitative and quantitative results converge to reinforce the theoretical propositions of Bandura's (1997) social cognitive theory, particularly the assertion that self-efficacy beliefs are constructed through four principal sources: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and physiological states. Each of the six motivational strategies identified—goal-setting, scaffolding, autonomy support, reinforcement, constructive feedback, and supportive classroom climate—can be conceptually mapped onto these sources.

Goal-setting and scaffolding, for instance, directly contribute to mastery experiences, which Bandura (1997) posits as the most potent source of self-efficacy. By clarifying writing objectives and providing structured support through outlining and guided practice, students were able to experience incremental success in completing writing tasks. These micro-successes gradually solidified their belief in their own writing abilities. This mechanism aligns with findings by Teng (2016) and Rahimi & Fathi (2022), who demonstrated that task clarity and scaffolded instruction significantly enhance students' writing performance and confidence in EFL settings.

Autonomy support, as practiced through student-directed topic selection, resonates strongly with Deci and Ryan's (1985) self-determination theory, which underscores autonomy as a core component of intrinsic motivation. When students are granted agency over their learning process, they are more likely to exhibit sustained engagement and internalize learning goals, ultimately strengthening their sense of competence. Similar results were reported by Nguyen (2020), whose research in Vietnamese EFL contexts found that autonomy-supportive environments led to greater persistence and risk-taking in writing tasks.

The study also highlights the importance of reinforcement and constructive feedback, both of which fall under the domain of social persuasion. According to Bandura, positive verbal encouragement from credible sources can significantly influence self-belief, especially when delivered in a manner that balances affirmation and critical input. The lecturer in this study demonstrated this balance by acknowledging students' progress while gently guiding them through areas for

revision. These practices mirror findings by Usher and Pajares (2008) and Putri et al. (2021), who emphasized that feedback perceived as fair and supportive fosters resilience and self-regulation among student writers.

Moreover, the creation of a supportive classroom climate addresses the final source of self-efficacy: physiological and affective states. Writing, especially in a second language, is often accompanied by anxiety, fear of judgment, and vulnerability. The lecturer's intentional efforts to build psychological safety—through inclusive norms, peer encouragement, and respect—mitigated negative emotional states that could otherwise erode self-efficacy. This affective dimension of classroom ecology is frequently overlooked, yet studies such as Tuan (2010) and Woodrow (2011) have documented the critical role of emotional comfort in supporting writing development.

On the quantitative side, the regression analysis confirmed that motivational strategies significantly predict students' writing self-efficacy, explaining 26.1% of the variance (R^2 = 0.261). While this indicates a moderate effect size, it is nonetheless substantial given the complex, multifactorial nature of academic self-beliefs. The regression coefficient (B = 0.320; p = 0.004) suggests that improvements in teacher motivation strategies are associated with measurable increases in self-efficacy, affirming the practical value of such interventions in real classroom contexts. These findings are consistent with the national study by Suparman (2021), which reported that teacher clarity, encouragement, and structured support significantly influenced learners' academic self-efficacy across disciplines in Indonesian universities.

However, the study also surfaces important nuances and limitations. Some students expressed mixed reactions to certain strategies, particularly feedback that was perceived as overly critical or lacking clarity. This highlights a common tension in writing instruction—between offering constructive critique and maintaining emotional encouragement. As Hyland & Hyland (2019) suggest, the impact of feedback is not solely determined by its content, but also by how it is delivered and interpreted within the learner-teacher relationship. Thus, motivational strategies must be adapted to individual learner needs and affective responses.

Furthermore, the study involved only one lecturer and a relatively small student sample from a single institution. While this allowed for in-depth exploration, it also limits generalizability. Future research could adopt a longitudinal or multi-site design to examine how sustained exposure to motivational pedagogy influences students' writing confidence over time and across diverse educational contexts.

Overall, the findings of this study underscore that motivational strategies are not ancillary techniques, but central pillars of effective EFL writing instruction. By intentionally integrating strategies that target the psychological dimensions of learning, educators can cultivate students' belief in their own capacities, which in

turn may lead to improved performance, autonomy, and long-term academic growth.

Conclusion

This study concludes that teacher motivational strategies play a significant role in shaping EFL students' writing self-efficacy in higher education. Drawing from both qualitative insights and quantitative validation, the findings demonstrate that the consistent application of motivational practices—such as goal-setting, scaffolding, autonomy support, reinforcement, constructive feedback, and a supportive classroom climate—can foster learners' confidence, engagement, and persistence in academic writing tasks. These strategies, when implemented with sensitivity and responsiveness, serve not only to facilitate cognitive learning but also to address the affective dimensions of writing, which are particularly salient in second-language contexts.

The regression analysis confirmed a statistically significant relationship between perceived teacher motivational strategies and students' writing self-efficacy, with 26.1% of the variance in self-efficacy scores explained by the independent variable. These findings provide empirical support for the integration of motivational pedagogy as an essential component of writing instruction in EFL settings. Furthermore, the study contributes to the growing body of knowledge by extending the application of self-efficacy theory and motivational frameworks into a less-explored Indonesian tertiary context, thereby offering both theoretical and practical implications for language educators.

However, the study acknowledges several limitations. First, the qualitative data were obtained from a single lecturer, which restricts the diversity of pedagogical perspectives represented. Second, the sample size of 30 students, though adequate for preliminary analysis, limits the generalizability of the quantitative findings. Third, the study design was cross-sectional, capturing a snapshot of perceptions and practices without observing changes over time. These limitations should be considered when interpreting the results.

Based on the findings and identified gaps, several recommendations can be proposed for future research. First, studies involving larger and more diverse samples across institutions are needed to enhance external validity and explore contextual variations in motivational practices. Second, longitudinal designs are recommended to examine how sustained exposure to motivational strategies influences students' self-efficacy development over time. Third, future research could explore the reciprocal dynamics between students' self-efficacy and teacher behavior, as students' attitudes and confidence may also shape instructional strategies. Finally, professional development programs for EFL lecturers should be encouraged to include training in motivational pedagogy, ensuring that teachers are equipped with practical tools to foster student confidence and autonomy in writing.

In sum, this study affirms that motivational teaching practices are not merely ancillary techniques but are integral to building student agency and success in academic writing. By aligning instructional strategies with learners' psychological needs, educators can contribute meaningfully to the development of self-regulated, confident, and competent writers in EFL settings.

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