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The Interplay of Enjoyment, Self-Efficacy, and Motivation in L2 Writing of Turkish Learners: A Structural Equation Modeling Approach

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Abstract

Writing in a second language (L2) presents significant challenges due to the existing cognitive and social intricacies. Furthermore, psychological factors such as motivation are possibly closely linked to L2 writing success. The writing motivation in an L2 is affected by different factors that interact to influence students' experiences and results. Among such factors, writing self-efficacy and enjoyment are essential elements that greatly affect L2 students' motivation. This study attempts to inspect the connections among writing, enjoyment, self-efficacy, and motivation. This study offers a thorough understanding of how such variables interrelate and affect one another. Gaining insight into the predictive force of writing enjoyment and self-efficacy provides valuable knowledge for teachers and scholars in developing interventions and strategies aimed at boosting writing motivation among L2 students. Two hundred and thirteen students from English Language Preparatory schools of two universities in Turkey took part and the three questionnaires, namely writing motivation, self-efficacy, and enjoyment were administered to the participants. The data was analyzed through Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The results indicated that there is a strong correlation between motivation and enjoyment, while the correlations between enjoyment and self-efficacy, as well as motivation and self-efficacy, were moderate. The result through SEM revealed that two predictors (writing enjoyment and writing self-efficacy) together explain 35.6% of the variance in

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writing motivation. The results suggest a moderate degree of predictability, indicating that such variables play a significant role in explaining reasons for people's motivation to write. These results provided important knowledge for language stakeholders.

Keywords: Structural Equation Modeling, Turkish learners, writing enjoyment, writing self-efficacy, writing motivation



1. Introduction

Writing is a complicated language skill that is crucial for learners to achieve success in education, careers, and everyday activities due to its various advantages for people to narrate events, convey information, and share opinions (Habeab Al-Obaydi et al., 2025; Hyland, 2019; Zare & Derakhshan, 2024). For second language (L2) students, enhancing writing skills is especially important, as it is a key measure indicating their general language competence (Teng et al., 2022). Over the last thirty years, research on writing has focused on writing products, feedback, cognition, and discourse analysis (Papi, 2021; Zare et al., 2023). Nevertheless, there has not been enough focus on how people's emotional elements affect their writing abilities (Kulusakli, 2021; Wang et al., 2023).

Affective elements, including motivation, self-efficacy, anxiety, and enjoyment, significantly affect L2 writing, as indicated by prior research (Sen & Boylu, 2017; Solhi et al., 2024; Zhu et al., 2022). Findings suggest that low confidence, reduced self-efficacy, and high anxiety can adversely affect EFL writing outcomes. Some previous studies (Deniz & Demir, 2024; Ling et al., 2021; Morali & Boran, 2021) indicated that writing motivation and self-efficacy can significantly improve writing performance while writing anxiety can have a great adverse effect on writing skills. That is, these factors play a substantial power in determining learners' behaviors, which can result in either positive or negative writing performances. Learning L2 writing is considered one of the most difficult subjects of the L2 learning experience so motivation is a vital component in this domain (Kuluşaklı, 2021).

Highly motivated students are more inclined to dedicate time and adopt favorable attitudes toward learning L2 writing (Tahmouresi & Papi, 2021). Indeed, motivation is critical, as it inspires students to put forth effort in fostering their writing abilities, leading to enhanced skill, confidence, and achievement in utilizing language for written communication (Yu & Jiang, 2021). Particularly, writing motivation which drives learners' motivations for writing has a significant effect on their success, which is a core concept and refers to a person's opinion of their ability to complete a particular task (Bandura, 2010). L2 writing motivation is defined as the degree of attempt learners make to dedicate to enhancing their L2 writing, their

enthusiasm for engaging, and how actively they pursue it (Waller & Papi, 2017). Learners' motivation in L2 writing affects their writing success, serving as a predictor of their success and skill in higher education (Wang & Xu, 2023; Yu et al., 2022). For instance, greatly motivated learners dedicate more time to L2 writing activities and maintain a more favorable outlook toward their L2 writing proficiency (Waller & Papi, 2017).

Moreover, writing self-efficacy is essential because it affects writing presentation and engagement in learning (Bektas-Cetinkaya, 2020; Sun et al., 2021). The confidence drives the perseverance and effort necessary to effectively communicate their ideas in their writing process (Tsao, 2021). Hwang (2020) argued that self-efficacy acts as a key for learners, reflecting their engagement in their studies. Social cognitive theory (SCT) describes self-efficacy as the opinions and beliefs individuals hold about their ability to organize and take measures needed to achieve specific function goals (Bandura, 2010). Based on this theory, self-efficacy affects how individuals contemplate, sense, and conduct. Those with high self-efficacy have a higher tendency to persist in difficult tasks and experience positive emotions. Self-efficacy affects the amount of effort learners invest in writing, their perseverance in dealing with obstacles, and their emotional reactions to activities (Arabmofrad & Shakki, 2025; Tsao, 2021). Some researchers (Sun & Wang, 2020; Sun et al., 2021) asserted that students' robust sense of confidence enhances writing skills, as positive self-efficacy leads to increased writing interest, effort, and performance.

Besides, positive emotions, especially enjoyment, are considered essential for writing activities, as they support self-regulation behaviors and motivate writers to remain engaged and adaptable during the difficult and prolonged cognitive writing process (Zhang & Dong, 2022; Zumbrunn et al., 2019). Writing task requirements can sometimes be tough and overwhelming for numerous L2 learners, requiring considerable attempt, proficiency, and knowledge. Therefore, fostering enjoyment in writing is essential (Zhu et al., 2024). Writing enjoyment refers to the positive emotional process people experience while engaging in writing tasks (Jin, 2023). This sense of enjoyment and happiness during writing significantly boosts engagement, motivation, and achievement (Tahmouresi & Papi, 2021). Therefore, more attention has been paid to writing enjoyment recently, which refers to the joy

that L2 learners feel when participating in writing tasks (Tahmouresi & Papi, 2021; Walker, 2017). Writing enjoyment can enhance their motivation, engagement, and positive outlook, helping them to manage writing challenges and achieve academic success (Prasetyawati & Ardi, 2020; Walker, 2017; Zhu et al., 2024). When learners feel positive and interested in their writing tasks, they are more prone to utilize a wider range of vocabulary and develop more complex writing styles that bring about writing achievement (Subandowo & Utomo, 2023; Zhu et al., 2022). Moreover, research indicates that enjoyment can result in beneficial emotional and psychological states, including satisfaction, happiness, hope, confidence, and joy. These positive feelings can further boost learners' motivation and engagement in writing assignments, resulting in improved writing function and success (Bielak, 2022; Tahmouresi & Papi, 2021; Wang & Jiang, 2022).

2. Literature Review

According to the Self-determination theory (SDT) theory, people have specific psychological needs categorized as autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2020). The theory asserts that when people believe they have control over their writing tasks and the ability to make choices, their intrinsic motivation rises. Autonomy fosters a sense of ownership and personal investment in writing. Competence is closely tied to self-efficacy. When people perceive themselves as capable and effective in their writing endeavors, their intrinsic motivation is heightened. Gaining competence through successful writing experiences bolsters one's belief in their abilities. Bandura (2010) addresses how self-efficacy, a facet of competence, impacts motivation and performance. Feeling connected with others and experiencing a sense of belonging can also affect writing motivation. Positive social interactions, like feedback from peers or mentors, can further enhance enjoyment and motivation in writing. The combination of SCT and SDT provides a thorough agenda for perceiving the relationship between writing motivation, enjoyment, and self-efficacy. Integrating these theories allows scholars to obtain a comprehensive perspective on how both intrinsic and extrinsic elements affect writing behavior and motivation. Bandura's SCT theory highlights the effect of self-efficacy in affecting

behavior and emotions, while SDT focuses on the significance of intrinsic motivation and performing basic psychological requirements. Such incorporation offers a solid theoretical foundation for examining the dynamics of writing motivation.

Learners' motivation in L2 writing affects their writing success, serving as a predictor of their success and skill in higher education (Wang & Xu, 2023; Yu et al., 2022). Writing self-efficacy is closely tied to motivation as a factor affecting the writing development of L2 students (Ardi et al., 2024; Sun & Wang, 2020); nevertheless, there are limited investigations on self-efficacy in L2 writing. Recent research by Golparvar and Khafi (2021) confirmed that self-efficacy is a crucial factor in learners' L2 writing achievement. In line with the results, high self-efficacy in learners predicts success in their L2 writing. The research indicated that writing motivation and self-efficacy can significantly improve writing performance while writing anxiety can have a great adverse effect on the writing skill. That is, these factors play a substantial role in shaping learners' behaviors, which can result in either positive or negative writing performances.

Although various research was done on enjoyment, self-efficacy, and motivation in language learning, there is a dearth of investigations examining these constructs specific to the writing domain. In a study by Zhang and Dong (2022), the correlation between motivational regulation strategies and emotions related to L2 writing achievement was investigated. Their data suggested that these types of strategies directly correlated to writing enjoyment. The correlation between L2 learners' motivation in writing and their enjoyment was explored by Zhu et al. (2022). The findings indicated that there is a relationship between writing motivation and L2 writing enjoyment which leads to better-incorporated writing outcomes. In a study involving 450 learners in Turkey, Turkben (2021) investigated positive correlations in writing skills, attitudes, and writing motivation. Furthermore, the results indicated a positive relationship between writing tasks and learners' self-efficacy and motivation. Despite numerous studies about L2 writing motivation, self-efficacy, and enjoyment, no research has simultaneously investigated the relationships among all three factors. This research aims to shed light on the personal factors affecting Chinese high school

learners' L2 writing and assist them in enhancing their L2 writing. Additionally, while prior research has largely centered on learners from countries other than Turkey, there is a lack of understanding regarding Turkish learners, especially those in English Language Preparatory Schools. Accordingly, the subsequent questions are raised.

Q1. Is there any significant correlation between writing self-efficacy, writing enjoyment, and the writing motivation of Turkish L2 learners?

Q2. To what extent do writing self-efficacy and writing enjoyment predict the writing motivation of Turkish L2 learners?

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants

The participants of this study consist of 231 learners from English Language Preparatory Schools in Turkey. Their age ranged from 18 to 39 ($M = 20.22$, $SD = 2.98$). Regarding the gender, 52 (24.8%) respondents were male, 154 (73.3%) were female, and 4 (1.9%) preferred not to reveal their gender.

3.2. Instruments

3.2.1. Writing motivation scale: A scale created and validated by Waller and Papi (2017) was used to evaluate L2 writing motivation. This scale consists of 7 items designed to evaluate the general writing motivation of L2 students. This questionnaire comprises items that assess features such as the learners' interest in writing, their effort in writing, and their level of L2 motivation. It utilizes a 6-point Likert scale, with responses fluctuating from 1 to 6 (never) to always). In this study, the reliability calculated through Composite reliability (CR) was 0.891.

3.2.2. Writing self-efficacy scale: The writing self-efficacy of L2 learners was assessed employing a scale developed by Han and Hiver (2018), which comprises seven items adjusted with Mills et al. (2006). This scale is intended to assess the confidence and beliefs that L2 learners have regarding their writing proficiencies.

It uses a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 to 5 (strongly disagree to strongly agree). Its reliability was 0.913 calculated through CR.

3.2.3. Writing enjoyment scale: The scholars utilized the items of Jin (2023) to assess subjects' enjoyment of writing. This included 9 questions, measured on a 5-point Likert scale, where responses fluctuated from 1 to 5 (strongly disagree to strongly agree), where higher marks suggested greater degrees of writing enjoyment among learners. The reliability of the scale calculated through CR was 0.923.

3.3. Procedure

The research's initial phase complied with the important ethical considerations to uphold the students' rights and well-being. The data collection, which involved 231 learners, lasted roughly 25 days. The subjects received the questionnaires through email and were kindly asked to complete them. They were encouraged to discuss any concerns about potential uncertainties. The subjects were assured of the privacy of their answers and they were also informed of their right to withdraw at any time without consequences. Comprehensive instructions were provided to assist subjects in precisely completing the questionnaire to make sure of their response validity. They were also clearly informed that the results would be used solely for research objectives which would be sent to them through email.

4. Results

By applying SEM, the researcher investigated the intricate relationships among variables to thoroughly examine their connections. In addition, to carefully explore the data set the author utilized different analytical methods, such as reliability, regression, and correlation analyses. The first stage in analyzing the data was to make sure that it was free from unengaged responses. To do so, first, the patterns of answers were inspected. As a result, from 231 collected answers, 21 cases with odd patterns (16 constant, 4 decreasing, and 1 increasing) were spotted and discarded. Moreover, the standard deviations of answers for each learner were

calculated and those with values below 0.5 (3 cases) were excluded as they were also considered as unengaged respondents. The final sample was left with 210 cases. A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) model was created to make sure that the instruments are valid in the given context. Using SEM the standardized and unstandardized loadings of the items were inspected to make sure of the convergent validity. The results are reported in Table 1, below.

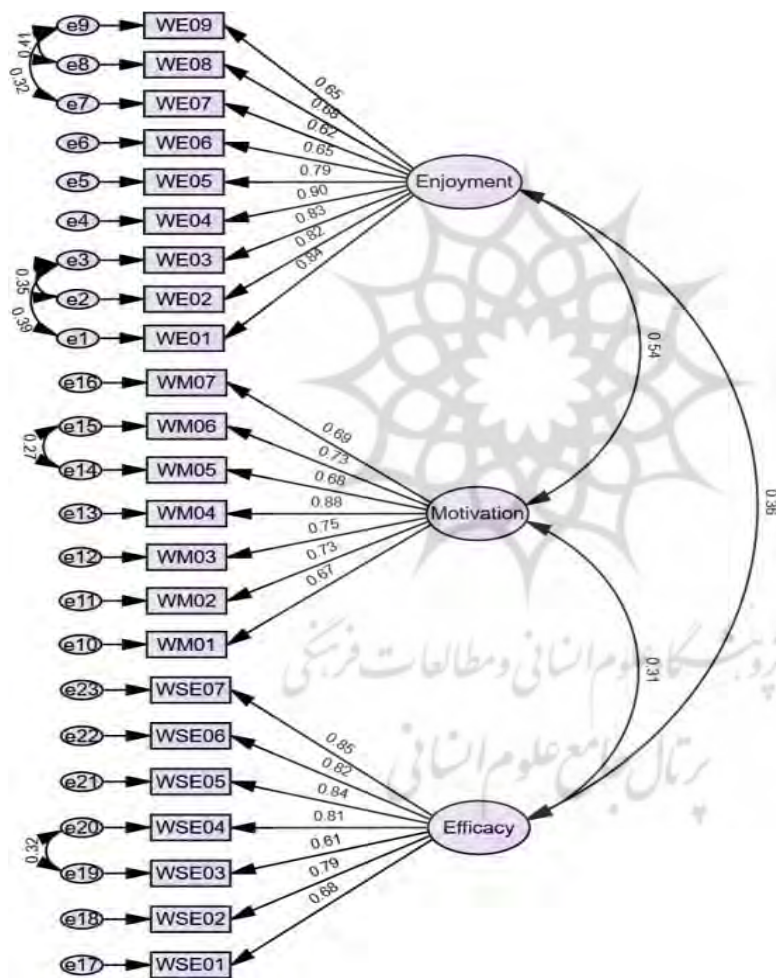
Table 1*Unstandardized and Standardize Estimates of the CFA Model*

Unstandardized							Standardize d
			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Estimate
WE01	<---	Enjoyment	1.000				.868
WE02	<---	Enjoyment	.906	.056	16.168	.000	.842
WE03	<---	Enjoyment	.996	.057	17.606	.000	.880
WE04	<---	Enjoyment	1.143	.065	17.524	.000	.878
WE05	<---	Enjoyment	.821	.060	13.666	.000	.764
WE06	<---	Enjoyment	.729	.069	10.587	.000	.643
WE07	<---	Enjoyment	.726	.072	10.141	.000	.623
WE08	<---	Enjoyment	.851	.076	11.273	.000	.673
WE09	<---	Enjoyment	.797	.074	10.737	.000	.650
WM01	<---	Motivation	1.000				.649
WM02	<---	Motivation	1.002	.111	9.028	.000	.723
WM03	<---	Motivation	1.164	.125	9.282	.000	.748
WM04	<---	Motivation	1.352	.129	10.457	.000	.876
WM05	<---	Motivation	1.238	.139	8.911	.000	.711
WM06	<---	Motivation	1.236	.133	9.303	.000	.750
WM07	<---	Motivation	1.088	.124	8.787	.000	.699
WSE01	<---	Efficacy	1.000				.676
WSE02	<---	Efficacy	.923	.090	10.224	.000	.784
WSE03	<---	Efficacy	.993	.115	8.616	.000	.648
WSE04	<---	Efficacy	1.171	.110	10.675	.000	.824
WSE05	<---	Efficacy	1.109	.103	10.722	.000	.829
WSE06	<---	Efficacy	1.175	.111	10.620	.000	.819
WSE07	<---	Efficacy	1.163	.106	10.940	.000	.849

As reported, significant unstandardized estimates and acceptable standardized loadings (above .05) were found for all items, approving the convergent validity of the instruments (Kline, 2016). To improve the model fit, the modification indices that were supported by the literature were taken into account. Figure 1 depicts the final modified CFA model.

Figure 1

The Final Modified CFA Model with Standardized Estimates



Regarding the reliability, as reported in Table 2, for all variables, acceptable (values above 0.7) CR values were estimated. This was affirmed by high values of

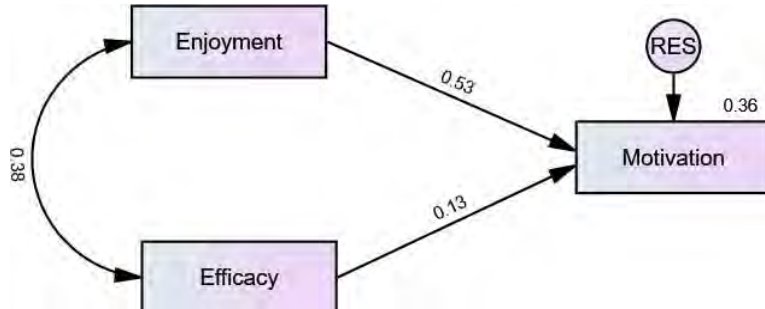
MaxR(H). Besides, the average variance explained (AVE) for all variables was above 0.5, affirming the convergent validity. Moreover, the maximum shared variance (MSV) values below AVE indicated discriminant validity. Finally, for each factor, the square root of AVE (the bold values in the table) was above its correlations with other factors, confirming Fornell- Larcker's (1981) criterion for discriminant validity.

Table 2
Reliability and Validity of the Factors

Fornell	-				Larcker	Criterion	
	CR	AVE	MSV	MaxR(H)	Motivation	Enjoyment	Efficacy
Motivation	0.891	0.542	0.293	0.906	0.736		
Enjoyment	0.923	0.575	0.293	0.939	0.541**	0.758	
Efficacy	0.913	0.601	0.127	0.923	0.308**	0.356**	0.776

** Correlation is significant at $p < .01$

The inspection of the correlations documented that there are significant relationships ($p < .01$) between all pairs of factors. This included a strong correlation between motivation and enjoyment ($r = .541$) and moderate correlations between enjoyment and self-efficacy ($r = .356$) as well as motivation and self-efficacy ($r = .308$). Finally, a measurement model was created to inspect the predictability of writing motivation by writing enjoyment and self- efficacy. The results are reported in Table 3 and depicted in Figure 2.

Figure 2*The Measurement Model***Table 3***Multiple Linear Regression Analysis with SEM*

			Weight	S.E.	C.R.	P	β	R ²	Multiple correlation R ²
Motivation	<---	Enjoyment	.504	.057	8.902	***	.535	.286	.356
Motivation	<---	Efficacy	.142	.065	2.180	.029	.131	.017	
Enjoyment	<-->	Efficacy	.244	.047	5.163	.000	.382		

As reported in Table 3, the two predicting variables together could predict 35.6% of variance in writing motivation. Writing enjoyment was the best predictor, distinctively predicting 28.6% of the variance in writing motivation while writing self-efficacy could only predict 1.7% of it.

5. Discussion

The research findings revealed that enjoyment significantly affected students' motivation to write. This positive relationship between the two variables was anticipated since L2 enjoyment has been related to intrinsic motivations and higher motivation degrees (Zhang & Dong, 2022). When students experience joyful writing, they are more likely to feel motivated to participate in writing tasks. Furthermore, recent studies have found the enjoyment- motivation relationship (Guan et al., 2022; Zhang & Dong, 2022). Intrinsic factors, like writing enjoyment and feeling competency (self-efficacy) originating from successfully doing writing

activities can affect writing motivation which is in line with Turkben (2021). By satisfying such psychological requirements, people have a higher tendency for motivation and writing enjoyment. The possible effect of writing enjoyment and self-efficacy in improving learners' writing motivation can be theoretically framed through SDT (Ryan & Deci, 2020). The notion that writing enjoyment is the most significant predictor of writing motivation is consistent with SDT principles. SDT posits that intrinsic motivation, which is driven by internal rewards like enjoyment and satisfaction, is stronger and more lasting than extrinsic motivation. Writing enjoyment can result in a more engaged and consistent writing task. People's intrinsic motivation to write increases when they find writing joyful because the task is rewarding in itself. Enjoyment fosters a positive emotional experience, making writing enjoyable. This positive reinforcement motivates people to pursue participating in writing tasks.

Writing self-efficacy could only predict 1.7% of writing motivation and this might be the reason that self-efficacy may be affected by contextual factors, such as the difficulty of writing tasks or the level of support from teachers and peers. If students feel overwhelmed or unsupported, even high self-efficacy may not translate into motivation. While writing self-efficacy is a predictor for a smaller segment of writing motivation variance, its influence is still noteworthy. Those with strong writing self-efficacy display higher enthusiasm and exert greater effort when tackling writing assignments (Camacho et al., 2021; Zumbrunn et al., 2019). Great degrees of self-efficacy can lead to greater grit and resilience in the face of difficulties during writing assignments (Yeung et al., 2024). This is in agreement with Morali and Boran (2021) who concluded that a strong self-efficacy can enhance confidence and mitigate anxiety, making the writing experience easier and less intimidating. Learners with higher self-efficacy generally are inclined to more effort into writing and demonstrate greater persistence when challenges arise, resulting in improved educational outcomes that support the study by Golparvar and Khafi (2021). It is well-recognized that students with high writing self-efficacy have the potential to be actively involved in writing, put in greater effort, set greater objectives, and ultimately achieve better writing results than those with lower self-efficacy in writing (Morali & Boran, 2021).

The results also indicated a strong, positive correlation between learners' writing self-efficacy and their enjoyment of writing. Confident learners as writers tend to be more motivated to participate in writing tasks and look for chances to enhance their writing proficiency, which, in turn, leads to greater enjoyment of the writing experience. Similarly, learners who find joy in writing are likely to be more motivated to persevere through challenges and setbacks in their writing, leading to greater self-efficacy feeling. The results are consistent with those of Ardi et al. (2024), who indicated that allowing learners to participate in enjoyable writing tasks can improve their confidence in writing proficiency.

6. Conclusion

Enjoyment fosters a positive emotional experience, reinforcing the act of writing. Writers tend to develop a favorable attitude towards the activity when they experience beneficial emotions during the writing process. Such positive reinforcement motivates them to pursue writing and look for additional writing chances. Writing enjoyment can transform the writing experience from a task into an enjoyable and satisfying experience. Writing enjoyment greatly affects writing motivation, indicating that individuals who find writing joyful are more likely to be motivated to participate in it. This is due to the inherent joy and satisfaction gained from writing, making it an essential element in maintaining motivation. Furthermore, while self-efficacy is typically a significant factor in motivation, it seems to play a less significant role in this case. It accounts for only a small portion of the variation in writing motivation. This suggests that although belief in one's writing skills is advantageous, it does not automatically lead to heightened writing motivation. It can be inferred that people who have a high self-efficacy are inclined to take advantage of writing chances, dedicate more attention and effort to writing, have persistence in enhancing their writing proficiencies, and possess great motivation that leads to improved writing performance. However, its impact on L2 writing motivation may be limited as a result of the complexity of L2 writing, the role of external feedback, and the need for constant emotional and motivational support.

7. Implications of the Study

The theoretical and educational implications of this study underscore the necessity of incorporating theories to comprehend the intricate relationship between writing motivation, enjoyment, and self-efficacy. Using these findings in educational contexts allows teachers to cultivate settings that encourage intrinsic motivation, enhance self-efficacy, and ultimately improve learners' writing motivation and results. The results have essential implications for educators to develop learners' writing. Teachers ought to create writing tasks that are enjoyable and interesting for their learners. Integrating creative writing assignments, group writing activities, and interesting topics can enhance the enjoyment of writing and support intrinsic motivation. The positive effects of enjoyable writing settings on learner motivation are highlighted by Myhill et al. (2023), stressing the need for designing tasks that encourage enjoyment. Offering positive feedback can boost learners' self-efficacy in writing. Motivating learners to establish attainable writing objectives and applauding their achievements can enhance their writing confidence and motivation. Furthermore, incorporating skill-building exercises that concentrate on fostering particular writing abilities can improve learners' self-efficacy. Since writing enjoyment is a significant predictor of writing motivation, educators should prioritize activities that make writing fun and engaging by incorporating games and storytelling elements into writing instruction.

8. Limitations

Regarding the limitations, the data for this research were gathered from a group of English majors at a university in Turkey, which limits the generalizability of the results to other populations until further research is done in different L2 writing environments. Additionally, the study comprised only 213 learners from L2 writing courses, which may not accurately reflect the broader population of English majors in Turkey. Employing a greater sample size in further research could enhance the generalizability of results in similar research.

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