

## Exploring EFL students' motivational factors in an academic writing classroom

Arinda Luthyara Adventi<sup>1</sup>

Yustinus Calvin Gai Mali<sup>2\*</sup>

Listyani<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1, 2, 3</sup>, English Language Education Study Program, Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana, Indonesia

\*Corresponding author: [yustinus.mali@uksw.edu](mailto:yustinus.mali@uksw.edu)

### Article Info

### Abstract

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Academic writing is a fundamental competency that should be mastered by English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students. However, to do so is often a challenging task for the students. That challenge might affect students' writing motivation. This study aims to explore possible factors that motivate EFL students' motivation in an academic writing class. To achieve that goal, the researchers first conducted a literature review of 15 relevant articles published in national and international journals. Then, the researchers conducted a semi-structured interview with four students to discuss the results of the literature review analysis. With a rigorous peer debriefing data analysis strategy, the research findings presented four main themes as the answers to the research question. The themes were related to technology and visual aids, learning goals, students' relationships and social environment, and lecturers' excellent competency. The findings were then discussed in light of the relevant literature. Practical recommendations (i.e., providing various writing template, spending enough time for writing consultation, and encouraging students to stay motivated in the writing class) for EFL lecturers teaching the academic writing class and ideas for future research, which included expanding the research participants and contexts to confirm or challenge the motivational factors revealed in the current study, were presented.

**Keywords:** *Academic writing, EFL, motivation, motivational factor*

## INTRODUCTION

The dynamics of student motivation and their willingness to learn English writing have captured the attention of educators and researchers. According to [Lai \(2011\)](#), motivation refers to reasons that underlie behavior characterized by willingness and intent, which revolve around beliefs, perceptions, and interests. This perspective resonates with [Borah \(2021\)](#), who defined motivation as a catalyst for promoting critical thinking, focus, and effective learning in English as a Foreign Language (henceforth called EFL).

Motivation stimulates learners to think, concentrate, and learn effectively. Motivation emerges as an indispensable component for success in learning English. It is the compass guiding students through the labyrinth of language acquisition ([Borah, 2021](#); [Mali, 2015](#)). However, motivating students to excel in mastering EFL is challenging. Engaging uninterested students who lack motivation or interest in school presents a widespread and frustrating challenge for educators in today's educational settings ([McCombs, 1995](#); [Wardani & Mali, 2023](#)).

Students' motivations over time have changed, either increased or decreased. Previous studies show that intrinsic motivation (i.e., one's desire or interest) leads to better experience and performance than extrinsic motivation (i.e., money, job, examination, etc.), as the process involves constant change and challenges that can demotivate students. Motivation is crucial as it drives critical thinking, deep concentration, and effective learning ([Alshenqeeti, 2018](#); [Borah, 2021](#); [Hayikaleng et al., 2016](#)).

However, there are many cases in which students often struggle to stay motivated to finish their writing. Many students encounter difficulties in the aspects of writing, such as using detailed and factual descriptions, appropriate lexical choice, and varied sentence structures ([Wang & Troia, 2023](#)). This leads to frustration and a lack of progress, resulting in students feeling overwhelmed and unsure how to improve their writing skills. As a result, many students do not finish their writing on time because they are not motivated to write.

Therefore, with that background in mind, the researchers aimed to explore possible factors that motivate students, especially those who enrolled in the Academic Writing Course. More specifically, this study tends to answer the following research question: *What are the factors that motivate EFL students in their academic writing classrooms?* The answer to this question will benefit English teachers, specifically in English writing courses, to gain insights into what motivates students in their writing. It also gives insight into maintaining students' learning motivation in writing courses so they can complete any assignments and understand the materials or essence of academic writing. Notably, this current study could add to the discussions in the literature (e.g., by [Kulusakli, 2021](#); [Listyani, 2022](#); [Mali, 2015](#)) about factors that motivate EFL students in their writing classrooms.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

This study now continues with a literature review defining and explaining the characteristics of students' motivation.

### Types of Motivation

Student motivation stands as a crucial determinant in the realm of education, particularly in the acquisition of languages, notably EFL. This literature review aims to explain the various aspects of student motivation and its significance in promoting effective learning outcomes in EFL contexts. Four main types of motivation were relevant to the EFL writing classroom as a setting of the current study. First, instrumental motivation refers to

a learner's desire to acquire a new language for utilitarian reasons and to reflect the practical value and advantages of learning a target language ([Gardner & Lambert, 1959](#); [Hayikaleng et al., 2016](#); [Kulusakli, 2021](#); [Sabti et al., 2019](#)).

Second, integrative motivation refers to a learner's desire to learn a language to know more about the cultural community of the target language or to adapt to the target community ([Gardner & Lambert, 1959](#); [Listyani, 2022](#)). This type of motivation is closely related to personal identity and a desire for meaningful social interactions. It involves an emotional or affective commitment to the target language community, often leading to a deeper, more intrinsic engagement with language learning. Motivated behavior, therefore, will lead to various actions to reach a goal. Motivational orientation can also be broadly classified as intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

The third one is intrinsic motivation. [Bai et al. \(2022\)](#) and [Hayikaleng et al. \(2016\)](#) defined intrinsic motivation (IM) in language learning as the drive to engage in an activity due to its inherent enjoyment and interest. A person may be motivated by the pleasure derived from the learning activity or a personal desire for self-improvement. In this context, students are drawn by their innate desire to study English, driven by an internal urge ([Hayikaleng et al., 2016](#)). In [Listyani's \(2022\)](#) study, the intrinsic motivation was also related to a purpose or target to be reached at the end of students' language learning journey, such as in an EFL writing classroom.

Then, [Hayikaleng et al. \(2016\)](#); [Kulusakli \(2021\)](#) characterized extrinsic motivation as actions undertaken by individuals to acquire rewards, such as high grades or salary increments, or to avoid punishment. Here, the students are encouraged by their external eagerness, such as looking for a job, taking examinations, etc.

From the theories above, motivation plays a vital role in learning, especially in EFL contexts. Instrumental motivation is when someone learns a language for practical reasons, like getting a job. Integrative motivation is about connecting with the culture and people of the language being learned, which can lead to deeper involvement. Intrinsic motivation comes from enjoying the learning process or wanting to improve personally. On the other hand, extrinsic motivation is driven by external rewards, like good grades or better job opportunities. These types of motivation influence how students approach and stay motivated to learn, in this context, English.

### **The Roles of Motivation in the Success of Students' EFL Learning**

[Hayikaleng et al. \(2016\)](#) emphasized that motivation is vital for success in mastering EFL. Their study highlights how motivation functions as a guiding force, aiding students in navigating the intricate challenges of language acquisition.

Motivation stands as a crucial element in undertaking various activities to attain success. When students are driven and engaged in learning English, they strive to exert their utmost effort to excel. This aligns with [Al Othman & Shuqair \(2013\)](#), who stated that motivated learners are enthusiastic, eager to work hard, concentrate on the tasks given, do not require constant encouragement, willingly confront challenges, and can even motivate others, facilitating collaborative learning. Motivation significantly influences students' success in language acquisition, encouraging them to achieve their goals, fulfilling needs, and responding to instincts ([Ai et al., 2021](#)). Motivation is essential in academic pursuits, compelling students to accomplish tasks and reach objectives. In essence, motivation acts as the driving force behind individuals' behaviors, shaping how they respond and engage in specific actions.

[Muhammad & Halabi \(2021\)](#) highlighted that motivation is evident in learners' selections of academic assignments, their time and energy in each task, and their persistence in completing academic endeavors. Motivation also enables them to handle obstacles they encounter in learning correctly. However, [Fortier et al. \(1995\)](#) suggested that a direct relationship between students' academic motivation and learning outcomes is not linear due to the intricate nature of the learning process. [Alshenqeeti's \(2018\)](#) investigation further strengthened this concept, emphasizing the constantly shifting and complicated challenges frequently resulting in students lacking motivation within EFL contexts. This interdependence signifies that more motivated students perform better, and better-performing students become more motivated. Their academic success is positively impacted by internal motivation and adversely affected by external motivation.

[Chang & Tsai \(2022\)](#) stated that motivation significantly influences learning activity. The absence of motivation makes achieving learning objectives challenging because students' commitment and enthusiasm profoundly impact their ability to reach these goals. In essence, the profound influence of motivation on learning outcomes underscores its critical importance in shaping students' educational journeys and ultimately contributing to their success.

Motivation is essential for success in learning EFL. It serves as a driving force that helps students tackle language learning challenges. It drives learners to put in their best effort. Motivated students invest time and energy in tasks, push through challenges, and achieve better outcomes. However, motivation and learning outcomes do not always match up due to the dynamic challenges in the learning process. While internal motivation positively impacts academic success, external motivation can hinder it. Thus, motivation shapes students' behaviors, influences their engagement in learning activities, and plays a crucial role in achieving educational goals.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research paper explores the factors that motivate EFL students in their academic writing classrooms. To achieve the research objective, the researchers first conducted a literature review of articles published in peer-reviewed national and international journals relevant to this study's purpose. To find those articles, the researchers used *Google Scholar* and *SINTA* (i.e., the same database that [Mali & Timotius, 2018](#); [Mali, 2025](#) used in their study), with the following keywords: *academic writing, undergraduate students, motivation, and research*. The researchers found 15 articles published in peer-reviewed national and international journals within the last five years (i.e., 2024-2019) relevant to this study's aims. Non-empirical studies were excluded from this study. The results of the distribution of the empirical studies are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1. Reviewed Empirical Studies

Journal Title	Empirical Studies	Research Goals	Contexts and Participants
Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education	<a href="#">Han &amp; Xu (2020)</a>	To prove that teacher feedback on peer feedback, if consistently provided and compatible with learner factors can scaffold both cognitive and social-affective aspects of student feedback literacy.	3 Chinese master's students enrolled in an academic writing course
Eurasian Journal of Educational Research	<a href="#">Kulusakli (2021)</a>	To determine which factors could influence the learners' academic motivation to write in English and its relationship with their gender and majors.	65 participants studying English at a state university's preparatory classes during the 2018/2019 academic year in Turkey
Frontiers in Psychology	<a href="#">Chang &amp; Tsai (2022)</a>	To explore the effect of students' emotional intelligence, learning motivation, and self-efficacy on their academic achievement in online English classes	450 students from ten universities in Shanghai, China
Heliyon	<a href="#">Alzubi &amp; Nazim (2024)</a>	To describe how EFL students become motivated by self-assigning their writing topics and identify students' attitudes and writing skills in topic-based interest in the EFL writing context.	200 students earning bachelor's degrees in English or translation in the College of Languages and Translation
Indonesian Journal of English Education	<a href="#">Kusumaningtyas et al. (2023)</a>	To examine the perception of students regarding teacher self-efficacy and its influence on their motivation in the context of learning	30 undergraduate students at a University in Yogyakarta, Indonesia
Indonesian Journal of English Education	<a href="#">Paradita et al. (2023)</a>	To explore external motivation in L2, extensive reading regarding word-target and pleasure reading	50 students at a university in Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Journal Title	Empirical Studies	Research Goals	Contexts and Participants
Journal of English Education and Linguistics Studies	<a href="#">Hidayati &amp; Diana (2022)</a>	To examine how students' English motivation in learning English is influenced by the time they spend accessing the apps	25 non-English major students
LLT Journal: A Journal on Language and Language Learning	<a href="#">Mali (2023)</a>	To present and discuss undergraduate students' different coping strategies to deal with challenges in writing research proposals.	6 Indonesian EFL undergraduates at a private university in Central Java, Indonesia
Linguists: Journal Of Linguistics and Language Teaching	<a href="#">Mauliya et al. (2020)</a>	To discover the internal factors contributing to the poor academic performance of graduate students of the English Department	Three students who are married and have a job do not like how some lecturers teach them
Premise: Journal of English Education and Applied Linguistics	<a href="#">Andewi &amp; Hastomo (2022)</a>	To find whether Flipped Classroom has better effectiveness than the Conventional Learning Model for teaching writing, if high-motivation students show better writing competencies than low-motivation students, and to see any relationship between the learning model and students' motivation for conducting writing	48 Institut Teknologi & Bisnis Bakti Nusantara students
SAGE Journal	<a href="#">Sabti et al. (2019)</a>	To examine individual differences in Iraqi EFL learners' writing anxiety, writing self-efficacy, and writing achievement motivation in the Iraqi EFL context.	100 Iraqi undergraduate students majoring in the English language from two Iraqi public universities.
ScienceDirect	<a href="#">Escobar Fandiño et al. (2019)</a>	To identify and analyze the aspects related to the motivation to learn English in undergraduate students of the Virtual and Distance modalities -E-	19 UVD undergraduate students



Journal Title	Empirical Studies	Research Goals	Contexts and Participants
		Learning-.	
Studies in Educational Evaluation	<a href="#">Yu et al. (2019)</a>	To examine English-majored undergraduate students' motivation and engagement in Chinese English as a foreign language (EFL) writing classes	1190 students from 35 Chinese universities
TESL-EJ	<a href="#">Esfandiari et al. (2022)</a>	To understand writing course requirements to bridge the gap between teachers' and students' expectations.	21 Iranian postgraduate EFL students
Theory and Practice in Language Studies	<a href="#">Qian (2019)</a>	To examine motivation for in-school writing in general, their L1 and L2 in- and out-of-school writing experiences in particular.	25 third-year university students at a Southern University in China in 2016

After conducting the literature review, which enabled the researchers to gain rich insights about the factors that motivate EFL students in their academic writing classrooms from diverse settings, the researchers conducted a semi-structured interview with the research participants to discuss the insights gained from the literature review analysis results.

The research participants were four students who took the English Academic Writing course in the academic year of 2023/2024 in an English Language Education Program at a private university in Central Java, Indonesia. They were selected because they had taken courses related to this research topic. The researchers also believed that they could discuss the results of the literature review analysis based on their experiences and perspectives as students in the class and articulate the experiences well to the researchers. To protect confidentiality, the researcher used fake names for participants (i.e., *Nina*, *Alya*, *Arnie*, and *Grace*). Then, the first researcher (A) contacted them via *WhatsApp* and invited them to participate in this study. Additionally, the researchers involved the research participants to discuss the literature review results in an interview session. The interview questions were about the themes presented in the findings section, asking the participants to comment on the themes.

After the interview, A explained the study's purpose to the participants. A then asked the participants to sign a consent form to participate as research participants in this study, assuring them that there would be no risks to their participation. The interview took place online using *Bahasa Indonesia*. The interview was recorded, transcribed, and analyzed. After the interview data were transcribed, the participants were asked to read the transcription and confirm that it matched what they said. This member-checking process (i.e., similar to [Wardani & Mali, 2023](#)) helps ensure the validity of the study.

There were two data analysis stages. First, A read the collected articles (see Table 1) several times and highlighted any words, phrases, or sentences relevant to this study's research question. She then presented her analysis results on the literature and interview data as themes and answers to the research question. In generating the themes, the researchers used the grounded theory approach, the one used by [Mali \(2015\)](#), which aims to develop theories/themes that reflect the research evidence or are grounded in the research data. Following previous studies (i.e., [Mali & Salsbury, 2021](#); [Mali, 2025](#)), the researchers agreed to present the themes in a complete sentence to answer the research question. The second author (C) then reviewed all the themes and discussions made by A, who then made revisions based on the feedback given by C. The third author (L) reviewed the analysis results and their discussions and revised some ideas that were not clearly articulated. With this rigorous peer-debriefing activity (similar to [Kritandani et al., 2024](#)), the researchers are optimistic that the review results presented in the following sections will be credible and trustworthy.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Findings

This study aimed to explore the following research question: *What are the factors that motivate EFL students in their Academic Writing classroom?* The following sections will show themes resulting from the data analysis in the literature review and the interview to answer the research questions. The researchers will present the findings in order, starting from the literature review analysis results, followed by interview excerpts that discuss them.

#### **Theme 1: The Accessibility of Aids, Visualization Tools, and Technology that Simplify Tasks Can Enhance Students' Motivation**

Digital visualization can increase students' writing motivation, inspiring them with new ideas. Alongside digital visualization, mobile applications' interactive features and user-friendly design spark curiosity, enhance engagement, provide control, and offer recognition, which are crucial for enhancing motivation ([Hidayati & Diana, 2022](#)). The following excerpt clarified the students' statements about this particular theme.

Excerpt 1:

*"... I think the technology is helpful to us for assessment [...] The lecturer allowed us to use Grammarly and a paraphrasing AI. They also do not prohibit us from using GPT, but not all are copied from GPT. I only use it to generate ideas."* [Nina/ interview/ September 1st, 2024]

Excerpt 2:

*"When I was taking the course, it is true that I used AIs such as GPT to help me in writing, especially when making outlines or finding references for my journal. [...] Not to find easy answers or cheating, but to make things easier."* [Alya/ interview/ September 13th, 2024]

Excerpt 3:

*"The use of technology surely helps us students in Academic Writing [...] I prefer visuals in my study. If there are a lot of pops of color, it takes my interest to learn and find out more about the topic."* [Arnie/ interview/ September 15th, 2024]

Excerpt 4:

*"... we used ChatGPT to paraphrase or simplify the sentences. Our lecturers taught us how to make a prompt to simplify our writings, or if there are specific terms or high vocabulary level, I could paraphrase it into simpler ones."* [Grace/ interview/ October 7th, 2024]



Based on the participants' statements, they all agreed that the accessibility of aids, visualization tools, and technology that simplify tasks motivated them. Digital visualization and mobile applications work well together to support students' writing motivation. These tools make learning easier, more enjoyable, and rewarding, helping students stay engaged and excited about improving their skills.

## **Theme 2: Learning Goals Can Increase Students' Motivation**

Several studies stated that students' motivated behavior varies depending on the degree of voluntary control and determination they demonstrate in language learning ([Hidayati & Diana, 2022](#); [Sabti et al., 2019](#)). Students' motivation is affected by the desire to achieve a set of goals or achievements ([Purmama et al., 2019](#); [Yu et al., 2019](#)). [Diasti & Mbato \(2020\)](#) study found that the students continuously remind themselves that they have to achieve their goal. The following excerpts clarified the students' statements about this particular theme.

Excerpt 5:

*"... I set my goals where I had to complete particular tasks [...] If I manage to achieve it, I will feel some sort of satisfaction from it."* [Nina/ interview/ September 1st, 2024]

Excerpt 6:

*"I made goals to motivate myself, and I had to finish this in a certain time. If not, I will be stuck. My lecturer already made deadlines for my assignment as well, so by the end it could be revised together [...] And I am very aware that if I did not make any progress, I would not know where to improve my work."* [Alya/ interview/ September 13th, 2024]

Excerpt 7:

*"At first, I made an outline, so I already knew which part should be prioritized [...] That way I am more organized, because I already planned my goals."* [Arnie/ interview/ September 15th, 2024]

Excerpt 8:

*"We had to submit our progress every weekend and present it to the class. So to keep us motivated, the lecturer gave us deadlines, since it triggers or encourages us to finish the task in time."* [Grace/ interview/ October 7th, 2024]

[Paradita et al. \(2023\)](#) found that two students shared that knowing a semester goal or weekly goal would prevent them from making mistakes as they did last semester when they were not given a clear goal or one they were unaware of. In [Kulusakli's \(2021\)](#) study, students reported that they planned their writing before making it. Their learning motivation could improve the students' academic achievement through their self-confidence ([Chang & Tsai, 2022](#); [Yu et al., 2019](#))

## **Theme 3: Students' Relationships and Social Environment Could Affect Students' Motivation**

Students' motivation can be influenced by anything. It can be from the students themselves or from the environment; friends, family, and teachers who have an important role as students' emotional support in Academic Writing ([Mali, 2023](#)). [Purmama et al. \(2019\)](#) also found that respondents have the motivation because they believe that English is an important language that can aid them in many aspects, such as communicating widely with other people. This is what some participants confessed. Some were concerned about their assigned partners and their classes' social environment.

## Excerpt 9:

*"We were assigned in pairs for the Academic Writing Course [...] Sometimes my partner was 'on or off' [...] But when they were lazy, I had to do all our tasks myself, which demotivates me." [Nina/ interview/ September 1st, 2024]*

## Excerpt 10:

*"If our partner was difficult to work with, lazy, or even procrastinating, it makes our assignment more difficult [...] But luckily, I had a perfect partner. We did well, we could communicate well, we were solid. [...] We took each other's back to ensure that the two of us already did our parts and that our writings were fine." [Grace/ interview/ October 7th, 2024]*

However, one participant was not affected by this factor, which aligns with [Han & Xu's \(2020\)](#) finding that one of their participants insisted that much "feedback" from their peers was simply because peers misunderstood their writing.

## Excerpt 11:

*"... usually outside the class, if there were any chances for us to work with our assignments together, we did peer-reviews with each other. We shared our feedback. It helped me, but not that much. I still put consideration on their feedback [...] But it still gave me a new view, so I could understand there are still flaws in my writings. That way, I had to improve my writing to be more comprehensive." [Arnie/ interview/ September 15th, 2024]*

Motivation does not only come from within the students, but can also be influenced by others or the surrounding environment ([Mauliya et al., 2020](#); [Diasti & Mbato, 2020](#)). As found by [Diasti & Mbato \(2020\)](#), the participants use several strategies to find a comfortable place to write their thesis, such as working in a quiet room, listening to music while writing, and even going to the library. The significance of learning English as a foreign language varies depending on individuals' perceptions of the skill and how it aligns with their environment. Notably, while most interviewees acknowledge the potential long-term benefits, their responses often reflect extrinsic motivation, as their behavior is influenced by external stimuli rather than autonomous choices ([Escobar et al., 2019](#)).

#### **Theme 4: Lecturers' Great Competencies Play a Significant Role in Students' Motivation**

Lecturers play a significant role in students' academic achievement and motivation ([Kusumaningtyas et al., 2023](#); [Qian, 2019](#)). They believe that they were more motivated if the lecturers had high self-confidence because they could trust the lecturer to deliver the materials effectively ([Kusumaningtyas et al., 2023](#)).

## Excerpt 12:

*"... Our lecturer was a little strict with us students and had little to no interactions with us, but on the positive side, whenever he explained the assignment, he already had the template prepared with instructions for us to follow. [...] he always pushes us to complete our journal by dividing our work into four parts. Whenever we finished one part of the journal, he made us present our work. That way, he could give us direct feedback." [Nina/ interview/ September 1st, 2024]*

## Excerpt 13:

*"... I enjoyed how my lecturer handled the course. I felt like my ideas came whenever I saw them. Because my lecturer gave feedback, it helped me a lot [...] even though some of the feedback was vague, I did not know where to improve or revise my writings." [Arnie/ interview/ September 15th, 2024]*

Many studies found that students admitted that they need support from the lecturers

through consistent communication, clear feedback, the use of communicative strategies like an approachable and guiding demeanor, and guiding them ([Escobar et al., 2019](#); [Esfandiari et al., 2022](#); [Mali, 2023](#); [Qian, 2019](#)). [Alzubi & Nazim \(2024\)](#) also suggested that students are likely more motivated to perform better in writing skills if their teacher allows them to choose topics that align with their interests. Thus, they believe lecturers should allow students to select their own writing topics or focus on subjects that interest them. This can enhance their writing skills, including idea generation, creativity, vocabulary usage, and writing mechanics.

## **Discussion**

This literature review explored the factors that affect students' motivation in the Academic Writing Course. The analysis results indicated four main factors affecting students' motivation and academic performance in the writing class. All these factors were related to extrinsic motivational factors or external forces outside the students. First, the accessibility of aids, visualization, and technology that make things easier can increase students' motivation, confirming the findings [Hidayati & Diana \(2022\)](#) reported. All participants agreed that visual aids and technology helped them throughout their Writing Academy Course, be it from ChatGPT, or visual aids such as presentation slides provided by their lecturers. Attractive visuals can get students' attention a lot better, resulting in better understanding by the students ([Hidayati & Diana, 2022](#)). Thus, using such technologies and visual aids can enhance students' motivation to finish their Academic Writing Course.

Second, learning goals can increase students' motivation. This includes the achievements the students have gained. Most of the participants admitted that they did not set their own goals. Most participants were motivated to finish their assignments because of the deadlines that their lecturers had set. Even though all of the participants agreed with the themes, this evidence does not align with most of the studies the writer had gathered ([Paradita et al., 2023](#); [Purmama et al., 2019](#); [Diasti & Mbato, 2020](#)).

Third, students' relationships and social environment could affect students' motivation. All participants agreed that their social environment and relationships affect their motivation. The result could be positive or negative; they got motivated or demotivated instead. This aligns with the studies that found motivation grows within individuals, and other people or the environment could also affect their motivation. It is a complex psychological process through which the environment and personality traits that people interact with ([Escobar et al., 2019](#); [Mauliya et al., 2020](#); [Diasti & Mbato, 2020](#)).

Furthermore, the last one, lecturers' excellent competencies, play a significant role in students' motivation. Surprisingly, despite having different lecturers, all participants appreciated their lecturers. Some even enjoyed their time with lecturers, as they got a lot of scaffolding and encouragement from their lecturers. This evidence aligns with the findings of the other studies by allowing students to trust their lecturers, encouraging them, and influencing their motivation. Lecturers play an important role in boosting students' motivation ([Esfandiari et al., 2022](#); [Kusumaningtyas et al., 2023](#); [Mali, 2023](#)). These findings indicated that motivation is vital to ensure students' success in completing their classes. As a consequence, teachers need to find suitable strategies and approaches to provide necessary guidance to keep the students' motivation up, which confirms the views of many studies (e.g., [Escobar et al., 2019](#); [Kusumaningtyas et al., 2023](#); [Mali, 2023](#)).

The researchers would like to propose the following recommendations for lecturers teaching a similar course. First, teachers should talk to their students openly and encourage them to stay motivated throughout the course. Second, teachers can provide various writing templates for the students. The templates can be in the form of sentences and phrases

commonly used in journals that the students can follow, for example, on how to summarize, synthesize, and reason their findings. For the templates, the students might also be interested in accessing the academic phrase bank website owned by the University of Manchester (<https://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/>). On that website, the students can learn various templates for introducing work, describing methods, reporting results, discussing findings, and writing conclusions; these are relevant for the students in an academic writing class. Third, teachers should spend time with their students so they can talk personally about their writing progress and receive the teachers' feedback on any of their questions or doubts. To do so, teachers might consider providing consultation sessions for more personal conversations with their students.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, factors that motivate students in their academic writing class are technology and visual aids, learning goals, students' relationships and social environment, and lecturers' excellent competency. The Academic Writing Course is a challenging subject for the participants involved in this research. However, they have strategies to overcome those challenges and keep their motivation up. As also concluded from this study, to ensure that students' motivation is still high, teachers need to make multiple efforts by setting goals or objectives, giving guidance and aid to the students, and keeping the environment positive and friendly for the students.

In closing, the researchers would like to propose the following directions for future research to follow up on the present study. First, future studies can conduct similar research to confirm or challenge the motivational factors (see themes 1-4 in the findings section) revealed by the current study. On the downside, this study was only conducted by four female undergraduate students at a private university in Indonesia. Future researchers are expected to have more varied participants with an equal ratio of male and female students. They can also have undergraduate students from other universities answer similar research questions and see if male and female students have similar or different motivational factors. This study revealed students' struggles and strategies when completing their academic writing course. However, it remains unknown if EFL writing students in another university, particularly those in a master's or doctoral program, could have the same struggles and strategies. A survey with closed-ended or open-ended questions might answer it. With an awareness of the challenges and understanding how to maintain motivation to write, the academic writing course should not be too challenging for students to complete.

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