Book review
Writing Motivation Research, Measurement and Pedagogy

Reviewed by: *Ana Camacho, Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences, University of Porto, Portugal & School of Health, Polytechnic of Porto, Portugal*

The book "*Writing motivation research, measurement and pedagogy*", written by Muhammad M. M. Abdel Latif (2021) and published by Routledge, summarises and integrates literature on the role of motivation in writing over the last four decades. This book emerges out of the author's experience and interest in writing motivation research—including a doctoral thesis on writing self-efficacy and apprehension—and out of his experience in teaching writing courses at the university level. Throughout six chapters, the author delves into research focused on eight main writing motivation constructs: writing apprehension, attitude, anxiety, self-efficacy, self-concept, achievement goals, perceived value of writing, and motivational regulation. Specifically, Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 are devoted to the conceptualization and measurement of writing motivation constructs. Chapter 3 focuses on the correlates and sources of students' writing motivation. Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 describe the effectiveness of different instructional practices and provide clear guidelines on how to motivate students to write. Finally, Chapter 6 presents directions to advance writing motivation research, measurement, and pedagogy. The book closes with a glossary of writing motivation constructs and other relevant concepts. The contents of all six chapters are reviewed below.

journal of
WRITING RESEARCH

Contact: Ana Camacho, Faculdade de Psicologia e de Ciências da Educação, Universidade do Porto, Rua Alfredo Allen, 4200-135 Porto | Portugal - anacamacho@fpce.up.pt - ORCID: 0000-0001-5328-966X

Contents

In Chapter 1, Latif introduces the concepts of motivation and writing motivation, traces the historical roots of writing motivation research, and examines the conceptualizations of writing motivation constructs. According to Latif, "writing motivation can be defined as an umbrella term encompassing learners' liking or disliking of writing situations and perceived value of writing, the situational feelings they experience while writing and the way they regulate them, the beliefs about their writing ability and skills, and their desired goals for learning to write" (p. 3). Given the multidimensional nature of writing motivation, Latif notices conceptual and terminological overlaps across different constructs. For example, writing apprehension and writing anxiety have been used interchangeably across studies, although the latter can be regarded as a symptom of the former. According to Latif, self-concept is another example of an ill-defined construct in writing research, which overlaps with other concepts such as implicit theories or writing giftedness.

Overall, accurate conceptualizations of writing motivation constructs will allow both researchers and practitioners to properly assess these constructs and develop motivation-enhancing interventions that fulfil students' writing needs. Importantly, this chapter provides a framework for organising the writing motivation field. Latif proposes four types of constructs: (a) attitudinal/dispositional constructs (e.g., apprehension; attitudes towards writing; perceived value of writing); (b) situational constructs (e.g., writing anxiety; motivational regulation of writing); (c) ability belief constructs (e.g., self-efficacy; self-concept); and (d) learning goal constructs (e.g., writing achievement goals).

Chapter 2 presents a comprehensive review on measures of the writing motivation constructs featured in the previous chapter. Latif provides a detailed account of sample items—sometimes even all the items—included in more than 40 self-report scales, while pinpointing shortcomings and inconsistencies across these measures. Moreover, Latif describes how the measurement of each construct has evolved over the last decades and provides directions on how to develop more stringent measures. For example, the author argues that no well-known measures of perceived value of writing are available. As such, he suggests that researchers need to develop a robust measure of perceived value of writing based on the items retrieved from extant measures—sometimes intended to measure other constructs—as well as grounded on a thorough review of general expectancy-value theory literature. By contrast, this chapter indicates there is a plethora of writing self-efficacy measures. Notwithstanding, there is room to improve these measures, for example, by ensuring a high correspondence between the self-efficacy items and the writing task under investigation. Based on this extensive review, Latif provides guidelines for developing and validating writing motivation measures (e.g., involving students in item generation; having field experts evaluate the items; combining factor analysis with Rasch analysis to

inspect construct validity). This chapter also devotes a section to qualitative research approaches, which are especially useful for researchers who want to understand students' writing motivation experiences and their sources of writing motivation (or demotivation). Qualitative approaches also allow researchers to obtain data that would be unreachable through quantitative approaches.

Chapter 3 introduces the correlates and sources of writers' motivation, which include: (a) personal variables; (b) performance, belief, and behaviour correlates; and (c) instructional practices. Personal variables, such as gender, age, and sociocultural background, are likely to be associated with writing motivation. Although gender differences were found in writing self-efficacy, achievement goals, and apprehension, these differences might be better explained by gender stereotyped beliefs rather than by gender per se. Regarding age-related differences, Latif notices both declining and increasing trends in writing motivation across studies. Sociocultural background variables, such as students' ethnicity and the environment in which they grow up, have seldom been researched. Overall, Latif reports that no definitive conclusions can be drawn from the limited number of studies that focused on gender, age, and sociocultural background, thus pointing to the need for additional research.

Performance, belief, and behavioural factors are another group of correlates of writing motivation. At the performance level, Latif identifies students' language proficiency—such as grammar and vocabulary knowledge—as well as writing processes and products as significant correlates of writing motivation. At the belief level, the author includes the perceived beliefs about one's language proficiency, one's mastery experiences with writing, and the relations among different writing motivation constructs. Finally, at the behavioural level, Latif presents behaviours that may be associated with writing motivation, such as writing frequency or procrastination, writing learning style, and the enrolment in writing courses or extracurricular activities.

Instructional practices are also key factors that influence students' writing motivation. The reviewed literature indicates gains in writing motivation following the use of digital technologies. Along with the use of digital tools, the topic assigned by the teacher and the nature of learning materials also play a role in motivating students to write. Students become more motivated to write when assigned a topic they like and are knowledgeable about, as well as when they are provided with interesting learning materials. Finally, the influence of teacher and peer feedback on writing motivation is also addressed. Specifically, the overuse of teachers' written corrective feedback and the excess of peers' criticism may have detrimental effects on writing motivation. As such, teachers need to carefully plan both teacher and peer feedback activities. This chapter closes with a description of motivated and demotivated writers' profiles.

In Chapter 4, Latif reviews studies testing the impact of instructional practices on writing motivation, some of them briefly addressed in the previous chapter.

The reviewed instructional practices are grouped into six types: (a) technology-supported writing instruction; (b) writing strategy instruction; (c) feedback instructional treatment; (d) genre-based writing instruction; (e) task interest-based writing instruction; and (f) therapeutic training. Not only does the author describe the impact of instructional practices on writing motivation, but he also details the factors that have enhanced the effectiveness of these practices and which specific motivation constructs have been targeted. For example, Latif considers that strategy instruction research has mainly focused on writers' self-ability beliefs (e.g., self-efficacy and self-concept), and therefore additional research is needed to unravel the impact of strategy instruction on the dispositional, situational, and achievement goal constructs of writing motivation (e.g., writing apprehension, anxiety, and achievement goals).

Throughout this chapter, Latif also identifies important research gaps in instructional research. Some of these studies included writing motivation as a peripherical, secondary variable, and included other variables as their main outcomes (e.g., writing performance). Additionally, conceptualization and measurement issues were evident across this body of research, such as incorrect labels for writing motivation constructs and selection of short and inadequate measures. Another shortcoming is the profusion of quantitative research, which is in sharp contrast with the small number of qualitative studies. This shortcoming is worth mentioning as qualitative studies may deepen our understanding of students' motivational responses to different instructional practices. Latif also notices that genre-based, task interest-based instruction, and therapeutic training have received considerably less attention in writing motivation research when compared to the other types of instructional practices.

Chapter 5 presents the following research-driven guidelines to enhance students' writing motivation: (a) nurturing students' writing motivational perceptions, beliefs, and goals; (b) using appropriate teaching materials and writing tasks; (c) meeting students' language and writing performance needs; (d) integrating technological tools in writing instruction; (e) optimizing teacher feedback; and (f) orchestrating peer assessment activities. Particularly relevant is that Latif formulates these guidelines based on previous recommendations—such as the four clusters of conditions for developing writing motivation proposed by Bruning and Horn (2000)—and embeds contributions from both first language and second language learning studies. This chapter closes with a table useful for teachers, which summarises the main guidelines to motivate writers and the pedagogical procedures associated with them. For example, excess of criticism and negative attitudes sometimes occur in peer assessment activities, which may jeopardize students' writing motivation. Therefore, Latif provides clear guidelines on how to tackle these problems and to successfully implement peer assessment activities (e.g., ensuring that students are prepared for peer feedback; selecting the most appropriate writing medium for peer response; involving students while

planning; assigning adequate time slots for peer assessment activities). Latif clarifies that the six guidelines are not meant to be implemented simultaneously. Specifically, nurturing students' writing motivation, using appropriate teaching materials, and optimizing teacher feedback should become key strategies at any stage of a writing programme, while the other strategies may be deployed in specific moments depending on teachers' or students' needs.

Finally, Chapter 6 summarises the conclusions drawn from previous chapters, while indicating avenues for future writing motivation research, namely: (a) strengthening the conceptualizations and operationalizations of writing motivation constructs; (b) further researching writing motivation correlates and sources; (c) developing writing motivation instructional research; and (d) promoting effective writing motivation instructional practices. Specifically, Latif suggests that the writing motivation field has witnessed a considerable progress, but future research should develop more robust conceptualizations of some constructs (e.g., self-concept) and fine-grained measures of other constructs (e.g., writing anxiety). Concerning the correlates and sources of writing motivation, future studies may determine profiles of affective, behavioural, and performance variables of motivated and demotivated students. In addition, the author underlines the importance of placing writing motivation as a primary variable rather than a secondary one in writing instructional studies. Finally, a main research endeavour should be to disseminate effective instructional practices that promote writing motivation across the scientific community and through professional development programmes tailored for teachers.

Final Remarks

Given the multidimensional nature of writing motivation and the profusion of constructs, this book is a valuable contribution to organise accumulated—and sometimes scattered—evidence on the role of motivation in writing. Latif does a comprehensive review that covers conceptualization and measurement issues (see Chapters 1-2), correlates and sources of writing motivation (see Chapter 3), instructional practices and guidelines on how to motivate students to write (Chapters 4-5), and directions to advance writing motivation research, measurement, and pedagogy (Chapter 6).

Throughout these chapters, the author reviews older studies (e.g., the seminal work on writing apprehension by Daly and Miller [1975]) together with more recent studies (e.g., the study examining the effects of motivational regulation strategies on writing performance by Teng and Zhang [2018]). Particularly innovative is that this book integrates quantitative and qualitative research, studies conducted in first and second language learning contexts, and guidelines useful not only for researchers (see Table 1.1 for a framework of the types of writing motivation constructs), but also for practitioners (see Table 5.1 for main guidelines and specific pedagogical procedures for motivating students to write).

Importantly, Latif's book embodies an important research trend of narrative and systematic reviews on writing motivation which are driving and advancing the field (see also Boscolo & Gelati, 2019; Boscolo & Hidi, 2007; Camacho et al., 2021; De Smedt, 2019; Ekholm et al., 2018; Graham, 2018; Troia, 2012).

Latif's book also paves the way for discussions that will strengthen writing motivation research. An example is the chapter on profiling motivated and demotivated writers (Chapter 3), which may be linked with the person-centered approaches that are growing in motivation research (see Guay et al., 2020; Jang et al., 2021). Although Latif does not explicitly state the need for person-centered approaches, he describes initial profiles of motivated and demotivated writers associated with specific affective, behavioural, and performance patterns. For example, according to Latif, demotivated writers develop negative self-ability beliefs, have negative dispositional perceptions about writing, and usually do not get involved in extracurricular activities to develop their writing competence. By contrast, motivated writers develop positive self-ability beliefs, have positive dispositional perceptions about writing, and are willing to engage in extracurricular activities to improve their writing competence.

However, students' motivational profiles may be more complex than depicted in the two initial profiles proposed by Latif. The use of person-centered approaches—which acknowledge the heterogeneity within the student population—might be able to clarify whether there are subgroups of students (and how many subgroups) who share particular motivational traits and patterns in writing. The combination of variable-centered approaches—which currently dominate writing motivation research—with underexplored person-centered approaches will be instrumental in achieving a deeper understanding of the role of motivation in students with different characteristics.

Closely linked with person-centered approaches, longitudinal research designs might also push writing motivation research forward. Latif's book does not discuss longitudinal studies, possibly because these studies are rare in writing motivation research. By using longitudinal designs, researchers will be able to follow the trajectories of different writing motivation constructs in students over the school years (Camacho et al., 2021). Such studies will be especially useful to examine age and grade-level differences in writing motivation since Latif reports that clear patterns could not be established based on the available literature. In the future, researchers could even combine person-centered approaches and longitudinal research designs to study the developmental trajectories of subgroups of students characterized by similar patterns of writing motivation.

Furthermore, in line with the research trend of synthesising writing motivation research, a next step might be the publication of meta-analyses determining the strength of the relations between motivation-related constructs and writing performance measures, as well as meta-analyses examining the effects of instructional practices on writing motivation measures. For example, both in

Latif's book and in our systematic review (Camacho et al., 2021), we notice that self-efficacy has been the most studied writing motivation construct. Therefore, in the future, researchers could estimate the effect size of the relations between different dimensions of writing self-efficacy, measures of writing mechanics, and text quality. The conduction of meta-analyses would also deepen our understanding on the role of key moderators, such as gender, grade-level, type of self-efficacy measure, and type of writing measure.

In addition, through meta-analytic procedures, researchers could examine the effectiveness of the instructional practices reviewed by Latif (see Chapter 4) on students' writing motivation. This would be especially important considering that Latif contends that some instructional practices are more effective (e.g., genre-based instruction) than others (e.g., peer feedback). However, these claims need to be supported by data from meta-analyses estimating and comparing the impact of different instructional practices on writing motivation measures.

In summary, the future is bright for writing motivation research (Alves, 2012) as many possible and stimulating research avenues will guide future empirical studies and review works. In order for future studies to achieve the goals suggested by Latif—such as strengthening the conceptualizations of writing motivation constructs, researching writing motivation correlates, conducting instructional research, and disseminating effective instructional practices to promote writing motivation—researchers will need to rely on rigorous and cutting-edge methodological designs and approaches. In this regard, the field would benefit from the combination of variable- with person-centered research approaches, from longitudinal studies, and from the publication of meta-analyses. To conclude, the book "Writing motivation research, measurement and pedagogy" by Muhammad M. M. Abdel Latif (2021) features a comprehensive review of writing motivation research conducted over the past 40 years. This is a valuable contribution that will push the research agenda forward. Ultimately, this book will help both researchers and practitioners to accomplish the common goal of raising motivated writers.

Acknowledgements

References

Alves, R. A. (2012). The future is bright for writing research. In V. W. Berninger (Ed.), *Past, present, and future contributions of cognitive writing research to cognitive psychology* (pp. 591-598). New York and London: Psychology Press.

Boscolo, P., & Gelati, C. (2019). Motivating writers. In S. Graham, C. A. MacArthur, & M. Hebert (Eds.), *Best practices in writing instruction* (pp. 51-80). New York: The Guilford Press.

Boscolo, P., & Hidi, S. (2007). The multiple meanings of motivation to write. In S. Hidi & P. Boscolo (Eds.), *Writing and motivation* (pp. 1-14). Leiden: Brill. https://doi.org/10.1163/9781849508216_002

Bruning, R., & Horn, C. (2000). Developing motivation to write. *Educational Psychologist, 35*(1), 25-37. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15326985EP3501_4

Camacho, A., Alves, R. A., & Boscolo, P. (2021). Writing motivation in school: A systematic review of empirical research in the early twenty-first century. *Educational Psychology Review, 33*(1), 213-247. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-020-09530-4

Daly, J. A., & Miller, M. D. (1975). The empirical development of an instrument to measure writing apprehension. *Research in the Teaching of English, 9*(3), 242-249.

De Smedt, F. (2019). *Cognitive and Motivational Challenges in Writing: The Impact of Explicit Instruction and Peer-Assisted Writing in Upper-Elementary Grades* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Ghent University, Belgium.

Ekholm, E., Zumbrunn, S., & DeBusk-Lane, M. (2018). Clarifying an elusive construct: A systematic review of writing attitudes. *Educational Psychology Review, 30*(3), 827-856. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-017-9423-5

Graham, S. (2018). A revised writer(s)-within-community model of writing. *Educational Psychologist, 53*(4), 258-279.
https://doi.org/10.1080/00461520.2018.1481406

Guay, F., Morin, A. J. S., Litalien, D., Howard, J. L., & Gilbert, W. (2021). Trajectories of self-determined motivation during the secondary school: A growth mixture analysis. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 113*(2), 390-410.
https://doi.org/10.1037/edu0000482

Jang, B. G., Ryoo, J. H., & Smith, K. C. (2021). Latent profiles of attitudes toward print and digital reading among adolescents. *Reading and Writing, 34*(5), 1115-1139. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11145-020-10104-7

Teng, L. S., & Zhang, L. J. (2018). Effects of motivational regulation strategies on writing performance: A mediation model of self-regulated learning of writing in English as a second/foreign language. *Metacognition and Learning, 13*(2), 213-240. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11409-017-9171-4

Troia, G. A., Shankland, R. K., & Wolbers, K. A. (2012). Motivation research in writing: Theoretical and empirical considerations. *Reading & Writing Quarterly, 28*(1), 5-28. https://doi.org/10.1080/10573569.2012.632729