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THE INFLUENCE OF SELF-BELIEF AND WRITING PROBLEMS ON STUDENT READINESS FOR ENGLISH ASSESSMENT WRITING

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Abstract *This quantitative study investigated the factors influencing students' Overall Readiness for Writing Assessments at a large political science and law university in the Southwest China area. Employing a self-developed questionnaire adapted from established instruments and validated by experts, data were collected from a sample of 750 students across 15 schools. The sample, however, was heavily skewed towards new undergraduate students (60.0%) with limited university tenure, representing a significant limitation to the generalizability of findings concerning graduate readiness. Descriptive analysis showed students reported a moderately high level of readiness ($\bar{x}$ =4.94) and strong self-belief ($\bar{x}$ =5.55). Bivariate correlation confirmed significant relationships between readiness and Self-Belief (r=0.390,*p*< 0.01), Writing Problems (r=-0.241,*p*< 0.01), and Reading Quantity (r=0.118, p< 0.01). Multiple Regression Analysis confirmed the model was statistically significant (F (4, 745)=40.702,p<0.001), with the predictors collectively accounting for 17.9% of the variance in readiness. Self-Belief in Writing Skills (β=0.348, p<0.001) was identified as the strongest unique predictor, followed by Writing Problems (β=-0.159,p<0.001). Conversely, reading behaviours (Quantity, Breadth, and Depth and Courage in Reading) did not make a significant unique contribution. The study concludes that internal psychological factors (confidence and perceived difficulty) are the primary determinants of assessment readiness, suggesting interventions should focus on boosting writing self-efficacy among students.*

Keywords*: Writing Assessment Readiness, Self-Belief, Writing Problems, Reading Quantity, Graduate Students, Higher Education*

INTRODUCTION

The global imperative of English academic writing for graduate success and scholarly dissemination presents a profound, multifaceted challenge that fundamentally warrants investigation. While the dominance of English standardizes communication, it simultaneously imposes a systemic barrier on the burgeoning cohort of ESL and novice researchers. These scholars face a dual constraint: core linguistic deficiencies (e.g., grammar, academic vocabulary) are compounded by significant extrinsic structural impediments such as insufficient funding, inadequate research resources (Pandit, 2025), and a lack of proper institutional scaffolding. This environment not only compromises the quality of research output but also generates high psychological pressure (Sadaf et al., 2025), and contributes to academic integrity issues (Baysal Çalışkan & Razı, 2025). Furthermore, the specialized nature of scholarly discourse, which demands analytical rigor and discipline-specific rhetoric to authenticate findings, exacerbates the language barrier for non-native speakers (Awagu, 2021). Therefore, a study is required to analytically examine how institutional responses, including the provision of specialized tutoring, structured mentorship, and academic brokerage, must evolve beyond mere individual remediation to address these systemic failures. Such research will inform policies necessary to ensure the global imperative fosters equitable graduate success and maximizes research contribution, rather than serving as a mechanism for exclusion.

Traditional pedagogical approaches to writing readiness heavily rely on skill-based interventions focused on mastering objective metrics such as grammar rules, vocabulary breadth, and reading quantity (Cho et al., 2021; Vula et al., 2024). This reliance is predicated on the assumption that writing readiness is primarily determined by measurable, input-driven reading exposure. However, this established practice fails to adequately address the more potent psychological determinants of academic success. Contemporary research consistently indicates that self-efficacy (a student's self-belief in their writing skills)(Mohamad et al., 2022) and writing-related problems (such as anxiety) are often stronger predictors of academic outcomes than skill level alone (Basith et al., 2020; Binnendyk et al., 2024; Teng & Wang, 2023). Therefore, research is essential to analytically challenge the assumed sufficiency of traditional, skill-based readiness by quantifying the relative influence of these neglected psychological factors. Such a study will provide the crucial empirical evidence necessary to advocate for a redesign of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) curricula that strategically integrates affective and cognitive factors alongside technical skills, thereby moving beyond superficial input measures to address genuine student readiness.

While general academic success models offer broad insights, their utility is severely limited in specialized institutional environments, especially within a Chinese university context specializing in Law and Politics. These disciplines demand an extreme degree of precision, logical argumentation, and rigorous citation, thereby uniquely amplifying the psychological and linguistic pressure associated with high-stakes English assessment writing (Devardhi, 2024; Maria et al., 2024). The current literature suffers from a significant gap: the absence of context-specific research addressing writing readiness within these specific, high-demand fields (Karaulova & Edler, 2024). Furthermore, the unique challenges faced by future legislative brokers, namely, heightened legitimacy requirements for knowledge and the need to cater to diverse audiences, make general EAP interventions insufficient. Therefore, research is essential to establish a contextualized predictive model that directly addresses the unique demands of this disciplinary setting. This model will provide the empirical basis for the university and similar institutions in Southwest China to optimize resource allocation by

targeting the factors (e.g., self-belief) that offer the highest return on investment in improving student readiness and, ultimately, graduate success.

Problem Statement

Despite the increasing necessity for students at specialized institutions in non-native English-speaking contexts, such as the university in the Southwest China area, to achieve a high level of readiness for English academic writing assessments (e.g., theses, dissertations, and high-level publications), there remains a significant and unaddressed gap in understanding the true determinants of this preparedness. Traditional pedagogical approaches often prioritize skill-based training centered on reading behaviors, yet a lack of empirical evidence exists within this specific context to confirm if Reading Quantity, Breadth, and Depth or Courage in Reading are the most effective drivers of readiness, or if psychological factors such as Self-Belief in Writing Skills and the perceived frequency of Writing Problems are more influential. Consequently, the institution currently lacks a validated, context-specific model to guide the development of effective interventions, leading to potentially misdirected educational resources and graduates who feel inadequately prepared for the high-stakes English writing demands of their academic and professional careers. The core problem, therefore, is the absence of an empirical understanding of specific psychological and behavioral factors that uniquely and significantly predict Overall Readiness for Writing Assessments among this student population.

Research Objectives and Questions

This study aims to investigate the factors that influence students' Overall Readiness for Writing Assessments, which serves as the dependent variable. The research will examine the predictive roles of five independent variables: Reading Quantity, Breadth, and Depth; Courage in Reading; Self-Belief in Writing Skills; and Writing Problems.

The research questions are:

1) What is the students' current level of Overall Readiness for Writing Assessments?
2) What are the students' self-reported levels for: a. Reading Quantity, Breadth, and Depth? b. Courage in Reading? c. Self-Belief in Writing Skills? d. Frequency of Writing Problems?
3) Is there a significant relationship between each independent variable (Reading Quantity, Breadth, and Depth, Courage in Reading, Self-Belief in Writing Skills, and Writing Problems) and students' Overall Readiness for Writing Assessments?
4) To what extent do Reading Quantity, Breadth, and Depth, Courage in Reading, Self-Belief in Writing Skills, and Writing Problems collectively predict students' Overall Readiness for Writing Assessments?
5) Which independent variable is the strongest predictor of students' Overall Readiness for Writing Assessments?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The current study is conceptually grounded in the principles of Social Cognitive Theory (SCT)(Bandura, 1971), specifically utilizing the construction of Self-Efficacy, and integrating it with models of Academic Writing Development and Reading Comprehension (Shanahan & Lomax, 1988). This framework is chosen to move beyond simple skill deficit models by acknowledging the critical role of psychological factors in performance outcomes (Liu et al., 2025). The Overall Readiness for Writing Assessments (Dependent Variable) is viewed as a

measure of a student's perceived capability to successfully execute the complex behaviors required for high-stakes academic writing (Mujiono et al., 2023). Strategic writing behavior and motivational measures accounted for statistically significant and unique variance in predicting writing quality (Graham et al., 2017). The framework proposes that this readiness is a function of the following key constructs:

a) Self-Efficacy (Self-Belief in Writing Skills): Drawing directly from SCT, this construct represents the student's belief in their ability to organize and execute the courses of action required to accomplish the writing task (Moussaoui, 2024). It is hypothesized to be a significant positive predictor of readiness (Mardiansyah, 1970; Skar et al., 2023).
b) Perceived Barriers (Writing Problems): This concept is treated as the inverse of self-efficacy, an inhibitory psychological and practical factor. Higher perceived difficulty or frequency of problems acts as a significant negative constraint on perceived readiness (Rahmat et al., 2022).
c) Input/Exposure Factors (Reading Quantity, Breadth, and Depth; and Courage in Reading): These variables function as external and behavioral inputs. In the SCT framework, reading acts as a form of vicarious experience and mastery experience (through comprehension), indirectly contributing to self-efficacy and directly contributing to English reading(Jannatul Jannah & Melliofatria, 2025) (Li & Kirby, 2015). These factors are hypothesized to be necessary but insufficient predictors of readiness without the mediating influence of strong self-belief.

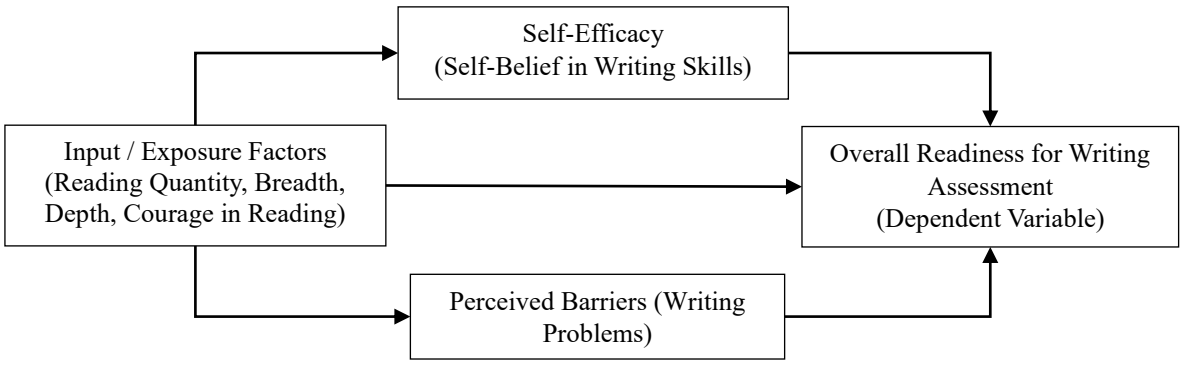

Figure 1
The Framework to Show the Relationship Between the Variables

Social Cognitive Theory and Writing Self-Efficacy

The theoretical foundation of this research rests heavily on Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), which posits that human functioning is a product of the dynamic interplay between personal, behavioral, and environmental influences. Central to SCT is the construct of self-efficacy, defined as one's belief in one's ability to successfully execute the course of action required to manage prospective situations (Bandura, 1971). In the context of academic writing, writing self-efficacy (Self-Belief in Writing Skills) is a powerful motivational construct that determines how much effort students will expend and how long they will persevere when faced with difficulties (Setyowati et al., 2024). Studies consistently show that writing self-efficacy is a stronger predictor of writing performance (Teng & Wang, 2023), and intention than actual skill level, making its direct relationship to Overall Readiness for Writing Assessments a primary focus of this investigation. The hypothesis that self-belief will be the most potent positive predictor is therefore strongly supported by the extant literature.

The Role of Perceived Barriers: Writing Problems

The inverse of self-efficacy is the presence of perceived barriers or difficulties, operationalized here as Writing Problems. High frequency of perceived writing problems is functionally related to writing anxiety (Abd Rahim et al., 2016), and task avoidance (Rahmat & Haron, 2021). When students anticipate numerous difficulties, ranging from generating content and organizing arguments to grammatical precision, their motivation and self-efficacy decline, leading to a reduced sense of readiness for assessment (Pajares, 2003). This framework views the experience of writing problems as an inhibitory factor that acts to deflate self-belief and directly hinders the perceived capability required for assessment success. A negative relationship between Writing Problems and Readiness is therefore highly anticipated.

Reading Behaviors as Contextual Inputs

Academic writing is inherently linked to academic reading (Maguire et al., 2020); reading provides the schema, discourse conventions, and source material necessary for advanced composition. This study includes two key behavioral input measures: Reading Quantity, Breadth, and Depth (reflecting comprehensive engagement) and Courage in Reading (reflecting motivation to tackle challenging texts). The literature on reading-writing connections suggests that extensive reading enhances fluency, vocabulary, and syntactic complexity, which should logically translate into greater writing readiness (Fitriansyah & Mitfah, 2020). However, from an SCT perspective, the influence of these inputs may be indirect; simply reading more does not guarantee a higher perception of skill unless that experience is internalized as a successful mastery experience that elevates self-belief. The current research is designed to test this distinction, specifically examining whether these behavioral inputs provide a unique predictive contribution to readiness when the psychological factors (Self-Belief and Writing Problems) are statistically controlled, a crucial gap in the current contextual literature.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Setting and Sample Representativeness

This quantitative study was conducted at a large, specialized political science and law university located in the Southwest China area. The research aimed to secure a robust sample across the institution's 15 schools, targeting a size between 378 and 1023 participants, a range supported by the sampling recommendations of Taherdoost (2017). The actual sample size achieved was 750 students. Despite meeting the required statistical threshold for a quantitative study, the sample is heavily imbalanced, consisting primarily of undergraduates (60.0%) and new students (64.4% with less than a year of tenure), while the study's central focus is on graduate readiness for English assessment writing.

Consequently, the obtained sample does not accurately reflect the whole target graduate population facing the most demanding English assessment requirements. The heavy bias toward early-stage undergraduates means the results are more likely to reflect foundational language skills rather than the specialized, high-stakes academic writing readiness expected of Master's and Ph.D. candidates. Therefore, while the sampling was statistically adequate for general student surveys, the findings' generalizability regarding graduate readiness is significantly limited to students in the initial phases of their academic programs within the Southwest China area.

Research Instrument Development and Validation

The data for this study were collected using a self-developed questionnaire that was adapted and modified by the researcher. This instrument drew heavily upon established scales from previous research, specifically incorporating items adapted from instruments developed by Zainal et al. (2011) and Asbjørnsen et al. (2021), the details of which are presented in Table 1. To ensure the instrument's quality and appropriateness, the questionnaire underwent a rigorous validation process. The content validity was established through review by two external experts in the field. Furthermore, the instrument's clarity and applicability were verified by an internal subject-matter expert. Finally, to ensure accessibility and accurate comprehension for all participants, the final version was professionally translated into Chinese by a qualified translator.

Table 1
Sources of Instruments Based On Study Objectives

Section	Variable	No. of Item
A	Respondent profile	5
B	Overall Readiness for Writing Assessments	5
C	Reading Quantity, Breadth, and Depth	5
D	Courage in Reading	5
E	Self-Belief in Writing Skills	5
F	Writing Problems	5

The initial draft of the research questionnaire consisted of 35 items, adapted and developed from previous literature. To ensure the internal consistency and quality of the measures, a reliability analysis was conducted on the collected data. Based on the results of this analysis, 10 items were subsequently removed because they demonstrated lower reliability scores (e.g., poor item-to-total correlation or low internal consistency statistics). The final instrument utilized for the primary data analysis was therefore composed of 25 items. This final configuration ensured that each of the five variables (domains of study), Overall Readiness for Writing Assessments, Reading Quantity, Breadth, and Depth, Courage in Reading, Self-Belief in Writing Skills, and Writing Problems, was represented by exactly 5 items, maintaining structural consistency across all constructs in the study. The overall reliability score (Cronbach's Alpha for the final 25-item instrument was 0.535.

The obtained overall reliability score (Cronbach's Alpha of 0.535 for the 25-item questionnaire, while falling below the conventional 0.70 threshold, is nonetheless considered marginally acceptable within the specific context of this study. This acceptance is justified because the research is exploratory in nature, adapting instruments for a novel and specialized disciplinary setting in Southwest China, where psychometric rigor is often relaxed during initial scale development (Morgado et al., 2017). The validity of a questionnaire relies on Pearson correlation analysis to confirm that individual items align with the total construct score (Daud et al., 2018). Although correlation values below the "high" threshold of 0.50 are often observed, coefficients as low as 0.25 to 0.30 are still deemed acceptable and relevant. This justification for retaining moderately correlated items is crucial for ensuring the internal consistency of the instrument, as confirmed by the more rigorous measure of corrected item-total correlation (Daud, 2018, referring to the work of other scholars). Furthermore, the scale's design, measuring five distinct, multi-dimensional constructs with only five items per variable, naturally limits the potential maximum alpha score. Crucially, the removal of 10 items based on preliminary reliability analysis indicates that the 0.535 score represents the

optimized internal consistency achievable for this specific set of variables and sample, placing the instrument above the unacceptable range and warranting its use for analysing the relationships between these complex cognitive and psychological constructs.

RESULTS

Participant Profile and Study Limitations

The study included 750 students recruited equally from 15 schools at a large political science and law university in the Southwest China area. The sample was composed of 60% female and 40% male students. Academically, the majority were pursuing a bachelor's degree (60.0%), with only 4.0% enrolled in a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) program. Reflecting their early stage of study, most participants were under 22 years old (79.2%) and had been at the university for less than a year (64.4%). These demographic details are fully documented in Table 2a and Table 2b. This sample profile presents significant limitations to the generalizability of findings regarding graduate readiness for English assessment writing. Specifically, the cohort is overwhelmingly represented by new undergraduate students. The heavy undergraduate weighting (60.0%) means the results primarily reflect foundational English writing skills rather than the specialized, high-level readiness required for graduate assessments, such as theses or dissertations. Furthermore, the limited university tenure (64.4% having been enrolled for less than a year) biases the sample toward individuals who have not yet encountered the most demanding, final-year writing assessments. Consequently, the findings cannot reliably establish the true readiness levels of the target graduate population at the university in the Southwest China area.

Table 2a
The Background of the Respondents

Item	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	300	40.0
	Female	450	60.0
Age	Below 22 years	594	79.2
	22 – 25 years	86	11.5
	25 – 30 years	47	6.3
	Above 30 years	23	3.1
Level of Program	Bachelor degree	120	80.0
	Master	60	16.0
	PhD	30	4.0
Year at the university	Less than 1 year	483	64.4
	1 – 2 years	74	9.9
	2 – 3 years	95	12.7
	More than 3 years	98	13.1

Table 2b
The Background of the Respondents

School	Number of respondents			Total
	Bachelor	Master	PhD	
School of Civil and Commercial Law	40	7	3	50
School of Law	41	7	2	50
School of International Law	41	8	1	50
School of Business	45	5	0	50
School of Foreign Language	47	3	0	50
School of Political and Public Administration	45	5	0	50
School of Artificial Inteligemce and Law	40	8	2	50
School of Economic Law	42	7	1	50
School of Administrative Law	42	6	2	50
School of Criminal Investigation	41	7	2	50
School of Economics	44	6	0	50
School of Journalism and Communication	44	3	3	50
School of Marxism	43	4	3	50
School of International Education	45	5	0	50

Descriptive Statistics

This section presents the descriptive statistics, specifically the mean values, for the dependent variable, Overall Readiness for Writing Assessments, and the four independent variables. These means provide the initial descriptive answers to Research Questions 1 and 2, which pertain to the students' current levels of the measured constructs. The analysis is based on a 7-point Likert scale (where 1 indicates the lowest level/frequency, and 7 indicates the highest level/frequency). In summary, the students reported a moderately high level of Overall Readiness for Writing Assessments ($\bar{x}$ = 4.9371). This level appears to be bolstered by strong Self-Belief in Writing Skills ($\bar{x}$ = 5.5547) and moderately high engagement in Reading Quantity, Breadth, and Depth ($\bar{x}$ = 4.8059).

Table 3a
Mean Value for Research Variables

No.	Variable	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	Std. Deviation	Variance	Mean Interpretation
1.	Overall Readiness for Writing Assessments	4.9371	.68809	.473	**Moderately Ready**. Students report being moderately ready for writing assessments, positioned just below the high-agreement range.
2.	Reading Quantity, Breadth, and Depth	4.8059	.65833	.433	**Moderately High Engagement.** This indicates that, on average, students engage in reading activities with substantial quantity, variety, and depth.
3.	Courage in Reading	4.5477	.58930	.347	**Moderate Willingness.** Students report a moderate level of willingness to engage with challenging or unfamiliar reading materials, though this is the lowest mean among the self-reported positive factors.

4.	Self-Belief in Writing Skills	5.5547	.63815	.407	**High Confidence.** This score, the highest among all variables, suggests students possess a strong level of self-efficacy regarding their writing abilities.
5.	Writing Problems	3.6757	.72087	.520	**Moderate Frequency.** Positioned near the scale's midpoint, this suggests students experience writing-related difficulties with moderate, but not persistent, frequency.

Bivariate Correlation Analysis

The Bivariate Correlation Analysis was conducted to directly address Research Question 3 (RQ3): Is there a significant relationship between each independent variable and students' Overall Readiness for Writing Assessments? These findings also provide the necessary foundation for the subsequent Multiple Regression analysis designed to answer Research Questions 4 and 5 (RQ4 and RQ5). Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were calculated, and the key findings are detailed below.

Correlation of Independent Variables with Overall Readiness

The correlation analysis revealed significant relationships between Overall Readiness for Writing Assessments and three of the four independent variables:

1) Self-Belief in Writing Skills: This variable demonstrated the strongest positive correlation with Overall Readiness (r = 0.390, p< 0.01). This strong, positive relationship indicates that as students' confidence in their writing abilities increases, their perceived readiness for writing assessments significantly increases.
2) Writing Problems: A significant, moderate negative correlation was found between the frequency of Writing Problems and Overall Readiness (r = -0.241, p< 0.01). This suggests that students who experience fewer writing difficulties report a higher degree of readiness for assessments.
3) Reading Quantity, Breadth, and Depth: This variable showed a weak, but statistically significant, positive correlation with Overall Readiness (r = 0.118,p< 0.01). While significant, the small effect size indicates that the relationship between general reading engagement and readiness is limited.
4) Courage in Reading: A very weak, but statistically significant, positive correlation was found between Courage in Reading and Overall Readiness (r = 0.084, p< 0.05). The minimal coefficient suggests that the perceived courage to tackle difficult reading materials has a very minor direct impact on readiness.

The study confirms that Self-Belief in Writing Skills, the inverse of Writing Problems, and Reading Quantity, Breadth, and Depth are all statistically significant factors related to students' Overall Readiness for Writing Assessments.

Table 4
The Pearson's Correlation Value Between the Variables

Relationship	Correlation Coefficient	Significance	Interpretation
Readiness – Self-Belief	.390**	$p < 0.01$	**Strongest Positive Relationship.** It indicates that greater confidence in writing skills is significantly associated with higher perceived readiness.
Readiness – Writing Problems	-.241**	$p < 0.01$	**Moderate Negative Relationship**. Suggests that students who experience fewer writing difficulties report greater readiness.
Readiness – Reading Quantity	.118*	$p < 0.01$	**Weak Positive Relationship.** Indicates a weak but significant link between higher reading engagement and greater readiness.
Readiness – Courage in Reading	.084*	$p < 0.05$	**Very Weak Positive Relationship.** Suggests a minimal direct influence of the courage to approach difficult reading on overall readiness.

Preparation for Predictive Modeling
The correlation results justify the use of Multiple Regression to address the predictive Research Questions (RQ4 and RQ5):

1) Initial Candidate for Strongest Predictor (RQ5): With the highest correlation coefficient (r = 0.390), Self-Belief in Writing Skills is empirically identified as the strongest individual correlation and is the initial hypothesized primary predictor. The regression analysis will confirm if it remains the strongest predictor when controlling for the effects of the other variables.
2) Suitability for Collective Prediction (RQ4): The observed intercorrelations among the independent variables (e.g., Self-Belief and Reading Quantity, r = 0.246**) are weak to moderate. This lack of excessively high correlation ensures that the predictors are sufficiently distinct, minimizing the risk of multicollinearity. This confirms the variables are suitable for inclusion in the Multiple Regression model to test their collective predictive power on Overall Readiness (RQ4).

Multiple Regression Analysis Results
The Multiple Regression Analysis was conducted to address Research Question 4 (RQ4): To what extent do the independent variables collectively predict students' Overall Readiness for Writing Assessments? and Research Question 5 (RQ5): Which independent variable is the strongest predictor of students' Overall Readiness for Writing Assessments?

a) Collective Predictive Power (Addressing RQ4)
The overall model summary and ANOVA results demonstrate that the independent variables, Writing Problems, Self-Belief in Writing Skills, Courage in Reading, and Reading Quantity, Breadth, and Depth, significantly predict Overall Readiness for Writing Assessments. The R^2 value of 0.179 indicates that the four predictors collectively account for 17.9% of the variance in students' Overall Readiness for Writing Assessments. The R^2 value of 0.179, indicating that the four predictors collectively account for 17.9% of the variance in Overall Readiness for Writing Assessments, is statistically significant ($F = 40.702$, $p < 0.001$) and represents a medium-to-strong effect size in the context of social and educational research, where complex human behaviors rarely yield high R^2 values (Cohen, 1988). R^2 is interpreted as representing the percentage of variation in the dependent variable explained by variation in

the independent variables (Figueiredo Filho et al., 2011). Capturing nearly one-fifth of the variance in a multi-faceted construct like writing readiness with only four variables is theoretically meaningful, particularly as the non-significant contribution of reading behaviors underscores the robust, distinct impact of Self-Belief and Writing Problems. The remaining approx. 82% of unexplained variance is naturally attributable to omitted variables, including crucial factors such as students' objective English proficiency scores, the quality of their formal academic writing training, and discipline-specific cognitive demands (e.g., critical thinking skills), which were beyond the scope of this focused psychological model.

b) Individual Predictors and Strength (Addressing RQ5)

The Coefficients table identifies the unique contribution and relative strength of each independent variable in predicting Overall Readiness for Writing Assessments (see Table 5.).

Table 5
The Values from the Regression Analysis

Predictor	Unstandardized B	Std. Error	*t*	Sig. (p-value)	Standardized β
Constant	3.115	0.333	9.347	< 0.001	N/A
Self-Belief	0.375	0.038	9.919	< 0.001	0.348
Writing Problems	-0.152	0.033	-4.660	< 0.001	-0.159
Courage in Reading	0.053	0.039	1.363	0.173	0.045
Reading Quantity	0.012	0.036	0.328	0.743	0.011

Two independent variables made a unique, statistically significant contribution to the prediction of Overall Readiness:

a) Self-Belief in Writing Skills: This variable was highly significant (t = 9.919, p < 0.001). The unstandardized coefficient (β = 0.375) indicates that for every one-unit increase in Self-Belief, Overall Readiness increases by 0.375 units, assuming all other factors are held constant.
b) Writing Problems: This variable was also highly significant (t = -4.660, p< 0.001). The negative unstandardized coefficient (β = -0.152) indicates that for every one-unit increase in the frequency of Writing Problems, Overall Readiness decreases by 0.152 units.

The other two variables, Courage in Reading (p= 0.173) and Reading Quantity, Breadth, and Depth (p= 0.743), were not statistically significant unique predictors in the model.

c) Strongest Predictor (Answering RQ5)

To definitively answer Research Question 5 (Which independent variable is the strongest unique predictor?), the standardized beta (β) coefficients from the regression model were compared, revealing Self-Belief in Writing Skills to possess the largest absolute standardized coefficient (β = 0.348), followed by Writing Problems (β = -0.159). Consequently, Self-Belief in Writing Skills is confirmed as the strongest unique predictor of students' Overall Readiness for Writing Assessments, demonstrating the greatest relative contribution to the dependent variable when the influence of all other predictors in the model is statistically controlled.

Conclusion for Data Analysis

Comprehensive data analysis concludes that Self-Belief in Writing Skills and the inverse of Writing Problems are the dominant factors determining students' Overall Readiness for

Writing Assessments. While students reported a moderately high level of readiness, the Multiple Regression Analysis confirmed that the four predictors collectively accounted for a statistically significant 17.9% of the variance in readiness (R^2 = 0.179, p< 0.001). Specifically, Self-Belief in Writing Skills was identified as the strongest unique predictor β = 0.348, p < 0.001), followed by Writing Problems (as a negative predictor, β = -0.159, p< 0.001); conversely, Reading Quantity, Breadth, and Depth, and Courage in Reading were found to be non-significant unique contributors. This suggests that psychological factors, confidence, and perceived difficulty are far more influential than the reading behaviors in shaping this student population's assessment readiness.

DISCUSSION

The current study investigated the factors influencing students' Overall Readiness for Writing Assessments at a specialized political science and law university in the Southwest China area. The findings, derived from the analysis of mean scores, correlations, and multiple regression, provide specific answers to the research questions and offer insights into the psychological and behavioural underpinnings of writing readiness within this academic context.

Overall Readiness and Descriptive Context

The first two research questions sought to establish the current levels of readiness and the related independent variables. The finding that students reported a moderately high level of Overall Readiness ($\bar{x}$ =4.94) is notable, especially when juxtaposed with the very high self-reported Self-Belief in Writing Skills ($\bar{x}$ =5.55). This disparity suggests a confidence gap: students express strong belief in their abilities, yet their perceived readiness for high-stakes assessments is merely moderate. This pattern may be indicative of the Dunning-Kruger effect (Pennycook et al., 2017), or simply reflect a common student tendency to overestimate performance, particularly among those in the early stages of their program who have not yet faced the most rigorous graduate-level assessments (a concern raised regarding the sample's representativeness). The moderate frequency of Writing Problems ($\bar{x}$ =3.68) aligns with this, indicating that difficulties exist but are not perceived as overwhelming.

Relationships and Predictive Power

The inferential analyses were critical in understanding the connections between the variables;

Prediction of Readiness

The collective predictive power of the model, accounting for 17.9% of the variance in Overall Readiness (R^2=0.179, p> 0.001), confirms that the variables selected, Self-Belief, Writing Problems, Reading Quantity, and Courage in Reading, are statistically relevant and useful in modelling student preparedness. While this is a statistically significant finding, the remaining approx. 82% of variance suggests that other factors, such as formal academic training, quality of instruction, disciplinary-specific writing demands, or cultural expectations regarding assessment, play a substantial role and warrant further investigation.

The Strongest Predictors

Addressing the primary objective, the regression analysis unequivocally established Self-Belief in Writing Skills as the strongest unique predictor of readiness (β0.348, p<0.001). This finding is consistent with established literature in educational psychology, which frequently highlights self-efficacy as a more direct determinant of performance and task engagement than objective skill measures. High self-belief likely translates into greater persistence and

less anxiety when approaching complex writing tasks, thus boosting perceived readiness. Writing Problems emerged as the second strongest predictor, exhibiting a significant negative relationship ($\beta = 0.159$, $p < 0.001$). This suggests that perceived obstacles or challenges in the writing process are a significant impediment to feeling ready. The combined strength of Self-Belief and Writing Problems emphasizes the paramount importance of psychological and perceived competency factors over external behaviours.

Role of Reading Behaviours

A key insight of this study lies in the non-significant contribution of Reading Quantity, Breadth, and Depth, and Courage in Reading as unique predictors of readiness in the final model. Although these variables showed weak positive correlations in the initial analysis, their lack of unique contribution in the multiple regression suggests that the effect of reading on readiness is likely indirect or already captured by the strong self-belief factor. For this population, simply reading more or being brave in reading does not automatically translate into a feeling of assessment readiness; instead, students must first process those inputs into a belief that they possess the skills required to perform.

Limitations and Future Research

The primary limitation of this study lies in the aforementioned sample bias, which limits the generalizability of the findings to the true graduate population that the study ostensibly targets. The high number of early-stage undergraduates means the results are most accurately applied to students navigating foundational writing expectations. Future research should prioritize a stratified or purposive sampling strategy that ensures adequate representation of Master's and Ph.D. students in the latter stages of their programs to validate these findings for high-stakes graduate writing. Furthermore, longitudinal or mixed-methods studies could explore how the interplay between self-belief and objective writing skill evolves over the course of an academic career.

Pedagogical Implications

The findings carry clear implications for intervention: instead of solely focusing on remedial grammar or prescribing increased reading hours, educational programs should prioritize boosting students' writing self-efficacy. Interventions such as process-based writing workshops, positive feedback loops, and instructional strategies that normalize writing difficulties could be more effective in enhancing students' feelings of readiness and, potentially, their actual performance.

CONCLUSION

The study's data analysis concludes that Overall Readiness for Writing Assessments is fundamentally driven by internal psychological factors rather than students' reading behaviours. While the multiple regression model significantly predicted readiness, explaining 17.9% of the variance, Self-Belief in Writing Skills emerged as the strongest unique predictor ($\beta = 0.348$, $p < 0.001$), followed by the inverse effect of Writing Problems ($\beta = -0.159$, $p < 0.001$). Crucially, behavioural factors like Reading Quantity, Breadth, and Depth, and Courage in Reading failed to demonstrate a unique, significant contribution. Therefore, the findings suggest that improving students' sense of preparedness should primarily focus on enhancing writing self-efficacy and reducing perceived writing difficulties, as these are the most critical determinants of assessment readiness.

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