



Closing the academic gap: Insights into student performance and institutional support for master of arts in English students

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this research is to explore how much support institutions provide to MA students in English and the relationship between institutional support and students' performance at Tribhuvan University, Nepal. This study employed a mixed approach to evaluate the hypotheses related to factors that influence master-level English literature students' performance. Descriptive statistics, a correlation matrix, and an OLS regression model were used for demographic representation, relational presentation, and inference in the study, respectively. Results indicate that fluency, summarizing ability, proficiency, and the structure of coursework are positively correlated with academic success. The results show that the most important factors contributing to improved student writing outcomes are institutional support, collaborative learning, and student-centered factors. Results also indicated that obligatory requirements and excessive priority given to mechanics have negative impacts on learners since they minimize creativity and originality. Systematic learning opportunities, inspiring learner engagement, and institutional support can help students overcome barriers to academic achievement. To bridge the gap, institutions require flexible, need-based, adjustable methods to make learning collaborative and effective. Therefore, official support and mentorship, including resource management, a cooperative academic environment, and a student-centric approach, positively impact students' academic writing performance, which in turn supports overcoming their academic barriers. Adjustable guidelines and student-centered procedures and practices make learning effective.

Contribution/Originality: This study contributes to the existing literature examining postgraduate English students' academic performance in relation to institutional support. It is one of very few studies investigating their relationship with hypothesis testing. The primary contribution is that institutional support significantly enhances academic performance. This research documents key barriers and support mechanisms.

1. INTRODUCTION

The academic environment for MA in English students is impacted by multiple personal and institutional issues that affect the academic performance of MA in English students. The challenges of being an English-language graduate student in a wide variety of educational contexts are most apparent in places like Tribhuvan University in Nepal, where MA in English students come from a wide range of backgrounds and English fluency levels. Prior educational experience has a major effect on graduate student success. Recent studies have demonstrated that students' decisions about enrollment are based on the quality of their undergraduate institution and the level of access to social capital, both of which ultimately determine how well an individual makes the transition into a master's

program and how successful they will be at the master's level (English & Umbach, 2016). Additionally, the level of language fluency and the anxiety that accompanies learning a new language, such as learning English as a second language, have a tremendous effect on how students choose to pursue and perform in programs taught in English (Ali, Bashir, & Ahmad, 2021; Amiri & Ghonsooly, 2015).

Language ability is a significant barrier to a student's success, but more importantly, students in graduate programs, especially when taught in English, struggle with language acquisition. Garganera, Ocampo, and Gueriba (2024) noted that previous studies have shown that English proficiency is critical for success in higher education. Rajendram, Larson, and Sinclair (2019) reported that although students may pass standardized English proficiency tests and may be accepted into graduate programs, the majority continue to struggle to meet graduate study requirements without adequate institutional assistance. Institutions must develop targeted strategic responses to help improve the academic success rates of these students (Devi, 2023; Rajendram et al., 2019). Such responses include integrated curriculum language-development programs for students in graduate-level programs. In addition to language ability, writing proficiency was also identified as a primary concern for many Nepalese master's-level students who seek to gain their degrees through a thesis. Most students experience difficulties writing academically or creating thorough research reports, both of which require technical and formal writing skills. These difficulties can stem from various institutional/academic factors (inadequate writing resources, inconsistent teaching practices and methods, and lack of systematic oversight or guidance), which may inhibit success. In addition, emotional factors that contribute to writing ineffectiveness include fear and shame, especially among neurodiverse students (Handford & Dobson, & Liu, 2021; Syharat, Hain, Zaghi, Gabriel, & Berdanier, 2023). Writing resources and practices support overcoming barriers.

The presence of mentorship and structured support systems is critical for guiding the academic experience of students. Supporting research indicates that the presence of mentors who can provide emotional and practical assistance significantly helps enhance the development of students, particularly in high-stress academic settings such as English master's degree programs (Barnes, Williams, & Archer, 2010; Moak & Walker, 2014). By prioritizing supportive and responsive mentorship, in conjunction with individual student-specific academic supports, the achievement gap can be mitigated while enhancing the likelihood of academic success for students. Furthermore, in the context of the Nepalese educational environment, other variables contribute to the academic performance gap. Socioeconomic status, the medium of instruction, and the precarious nature of the institutional support system all contribute to the academic performance gap between students in Nepal. As a result of these systemic issues, students are unable to achieve their maximum potential, and their long-term professional growth is compromised.

A comprehensive understanding of the relationship between academic performance, language proficiency, institutional support, and overall well-being must be considered to provide an adequate scaffold for addressing these complex educational challenges. The purpose of this study is to identify significant trends and connections between each of these variables, to facilitate targeted interventions to improve student writing education and academic performance. The anticipated outcome of this research is to produce practical suggestions to enhance the academic success of English master's students at Tribhuvan University and other institutions with similar educational contexts.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Academic writing can be a difficult task and requires not only clarity and originality but also conformity with scholarly patterns or rules. Zinsser (2001) states: "Many writers settle for less than their best because they are beaten down by too much negative feedback." Too often, this negative feedback has the effect of making a new researcher unable to translate their creative thinking into a written form. Consequently, they struggle to present structured and compelling research papers. Bailey (2014) suggests providing freedom in the choice of the style of academic writing but insists on accuracy, objectivity, and impersonal presentation. He opines, "There is no one correct style of academic writing, and students should aim to develop their voice." Although Bailey is in favor of providing some leeway to

researchers, academic writing, however, calls for specific conventions for writers to follow in terms of language and purpose of writing. Richards and Miller (2006) state that academic writing requires researchers to conform to “specific expectations of language, structure, and purpose.” Along with the three elements, the appropriate arrangement of paragraphs is another crucial element in shaping writing. Zinsser (2001) views paragraphing as a subtle but important element in writing non-fiction articles and books. Equally important is the topic sentence in research writing. Gurak and Lannon (2009) argued that unless a person has good reason to place it elsewhere, the topic sentence should appear first in the first paragraph. Academic writers need to follow certain writing conventions to make their writing formal. Along with this, it needs to meet expectations regarding language and writing structure. Logical paragraph arrangement is another point for writing development.

Placing novel thought at the beginning to capture readers’ attention is a must. Booth (2016) recommends beginning each paragraph with a sentence or two that signals its key concepts. The opening of the research paper should signal novel ideas and incorporate credible evidence, examples, and warrants to support the argument in the qualitative study. Justification of logic through examples and pieces of evidence is a crucial component of academic writing. Early Research on Writing Strategies and Feedback: Torrance, Thomas, and Robinson (1994) investigated the writing strategies used by graduate research students in social sciences across ten UK universities. Their survey of 110 students highlighted the effectiveness of think-then-write and think-while-you-write strategies in academic writing. Previously, Herrington (1981) discussed how teachers shape student writing and suggested improvements to writing evaluations based on the purpose of the assignment and the audience. By doing this, writing feedback can be given more objectively to help less experienced researchers. Scholarly engagements prioritize novel thought in writing, credible, evidence-based writing, and a process-oriented approach.

As for learning disabilities and students' perceptions of performance: Meltzer, Katzir-Cohen, Miller, and Roditi (2001) investigated how both students with learning disabilities and their teachers perceived the students' academic performance. Surprisingly, when the teachers viewed their students with learning disabilities negatively, the students maintained a strong academic self-image. Constructive feedback is crucial in this situation, and negative perceptions can cause students with disabilities additional psychological problems. Therefore, tailored support for students with learning disabilities is necessary (Amiri & Ghonsooly, 2015). Instructor influence and attitude: Petric (2002) examined the attitudes of non-native speakers toward academic writing at Central European University. His study demonstrated that the students' attitudes clearly impacted their academic writing performance and that writing behavior is related to the students' attitudes. At approximately the same time, Luna (2002) studied the impact of teachers on student writing performance, arguing that teachers should be actively engaged in the learning process together with their students. Luna stressed that teachers should listen to and work with their students to create effective learning and evaluation strategies. Teachers play a significant role in familiarizing learners with academic writing despite the physical and psychological hardships they face.

Bangert-Drowns, Hurley, and Wilkinson (2004) evaluated research about the impact on academic performance when providing writing instruction and strategies in the school environment (i.e., classroom exercises on writing). They concluded that giving students feedback on their work, along with allowing students to write in class, both had minimally positive effects on academic success. In an additional study, Kieft, Rijlaarsdam, and van den Bergh (2006) examined writing strategies among a group of 113 high school students in the Netherlands. One of their conclusions was that the students frequently created unique combinations of revising and planning strategies. Kieft et al. (2006) also speculated that, because of this, writing is probably not able to fit into strict categories of writing conventions. In Canagarajah (2011) study on writing strategy and context, voice, and text-based writing strategies (i.e., using textualization strategies), he asserted that providing feedback from peers and teachers is essential for students to improve their academic writing skills. Additionally, in an academic environment, multilingual learners may benefit from using their own language (as opposed to English) as a trans-language, or a means for writing (i.e., creating an academic text).

When providing feedback to students on their writing, Barnhisel, Stoddard, and Gorman (2012) argued that a process-based writing approach (meaning teaching students to write grammatically and at the sentence level) should be combined with providing students with feedback. Bawa and Watson (2017) examined the difficulties faced by international students and second-language learners from China as they wrote in English (a foreign language) and what types of phenomenological approaches could assist in improving graduate students' writing skills. They suggested that providing students with opportunities to be creative (via non-academic writing) can help them to develop their academic writing. Sennewald (2021) studied novice writers to reflect on their writing and found that novice authors tend to have flexible writing strategies rather than a fixed strategy (i.e., the authors' thinking that there is only one method that is correct to use). Kirby (2022), along with Mu and Matsuda (2016), performed an analysis on academic institutions globally, focusing on the impacts of research outputs from institutions on their rankings; the three countries examined in Kirby (2022) study were Germany, the United States, and China. Penprase and Pickus (2023) also researched higher education and discovered that the expense and perceived value of an expense related to education significantly affect academic engagement and enrolment in higher education institutions.

Ali, Shoukat, and Kharal (2021) looked at the relationships between socioeconomic status (SES) and anxiety experienced by students. Their findings indicated that, even though students who were classified with lower SES were proven to be more anxious than those with higher SES, the same did not always equal a lower GPA for those from lower SES classifications, especially within urban areas, as stated by Ali et al. (2023); Ali et al. (2021). Ombay, Kikomelo, and Daniel (2024); and Khelifa, Mahdjoub, Baaloudj, and Chaib (2022) pointed out the importance of having institutional support, including professional supervision and training, to help alleviate the negative effects of an individual's SES on their academic performance. In addition to anxiety regarding their performance in school due to their SES classification, researchers such as Bezliudna, Shcherban, Kolomiyets, Mykolaiko, and Bezliudnyi (2021); Supramaniam and Kholidi (2022); and Suciati (2020) found that fear of negative feedback and evaluation prevented students from performing well when completing speaking assignments. During the COVID-19 pandemic, blended learning models were of particular interest as they were associated with instructional methods and language of instruction. According to Bezlyudna and Dudnyk (2021), these types of models were perceived by students to provide more ways to engage with the curriculum than traditional methods; however, the level of success in using a blended model is based on motivation. In addition, both (Shintasiwi & Anwar, 2021) emphasized that instructors who provide instructional support to students can improve their performance on assessments. Qasemi (2020) focused on students to determine their need for a second language. Macaro, Curle, Pun, An, and Dearden (2017) documented how English Medium Instruction (EMI) was positively associated with students' self-reported competence and academic achievement, as well as the additional obstacles that rural students face, according to Wang, Tang, and Sutton-Jones (2019).

The recent research highlighted writing conventions, a process-oriented approach, teachers' roles, instructional strategies, feedback and engagement, socioeconomic status and anxiety, and the medium of instruction. However, this indicates that the level of support provided by the university and the performance of the master's degree students in English at Tribhuvan University, Nepal, are significantly affected by the performance of these students. Detailed hypotheses regarding all variables were established in this study.

Hypothesis 1 (Fluent): Writing fluently in English is positively related to academic writing performance.

Hypothesis 2 (Apprehensive): Fear of writing academic papers in English is negatively related to academic writing performance.

Hypothesis 3 (Imitative): Using friends' term papers as models is negatively related to academic writing performance.

Hypothesis 4 (Organized): The ability to systematically organize paragraphs is not significantly related to academic writing performance.

Hypothesis 5 (Proficient): The ability to prepare research objectives and hypotheses is positively related to academic writing performance.

Hypothesis 6 (Summarizer): The ability to summarize others' views is not significantly related to academic writing performance.

Hypothesis 7 (Citations): Frequent use of in-text citations is negatively related to academic writing performance.

Hypothesis 8 (Structured): Structuring research paragraphs in academic writing mechanics is positively related to academic writing performance.

Hypothesis 9 (Guided): Availability of departmental writing guidelines is negatively related to academic writing performance.

Hypothesis 10 (Compliant): Documenting papers using MLA guidelines is not significantly related to academic writing performance.

Hypothesis 11 (Obedient): Following professors' instructions is not significantly related to academic writing performance.

Hypothesis 12 (Collaborative): Receiving peer-review support from friends is positively related to academic writing performance.

Hypothesis 13 (Meticulous): Revising, editing, and proofreading academic papers are positively related to academic writing performance.

Hypothesis 14 (Mandatory): A compulsory term paper presentation requirement is negatively related to academic writing performance.

Hypothesis 15 (Satisfied): Satisfaction with academic writing strategies is positively related to academic writing performance.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

Mixed methods are used in this research to analyse how academic and institutional factors influence student success; regression analysis, correlation, and hypothesis testing are used to identify significant predictors of success within the master's degree program in English at Tribhuvan University.

3.2. Population, Sampling and Data Collection Methods

For data collection, two methods were used: a structured questionnaire and an interview/focus group discussion (FGD) method with MA. There are 14 constituent campuses of Tribhuvan University (TU) offering an MA in English, and 5 of the 14 campuses provide an MA in English Literature in Kathmandu Valley. Out of 111 third-semester students enrolled in an MA program at 5 campuses, 60 of the students were sampled using a convenience sampling method. University Campus, Kirtipur, Padmakanya Multiple Campus, Bagbazar, Patan Multiple Campus, Ratna Rajya Campus, and Saraswati Multiple Campus, Kathmandu, were selected purposively from T.U., Nepal. Factors that were investigated through the survey were academic (language fluency, satisfaction), institutional (support for students), and collaborative factors. Interviews and FGDs collected more in-depth information about the qualitative aspects of students, using the survey for a complete understanding of the academics they experienced.

3.3. Data Analysis Methods

Descriptive statistics (mean, median, mode, standard deviation, and variance) were used to describe the demographics (gender, age, ethnicity, and address) of the survey respondents and to summarize the academic and institutional response data to the survey. The descriptive statistics provided a summary of the data in terms of patterns and trends found in the responses to the academic and institutional surveys. Using a correlation matrix, the study examined the relationships between academic factors (fluency and proficiency) and institutional support. The correlation matrix helped to explain how institutional support and academic factors related to each other. Using an OLS regression model, the effects of a variety of academic and institutional factors on academic performance were assessed, and the major predictors for academic performance were identified, particularly collaboration and mandatory

participation. Using chi-square tests, associations were examined between categorical variables to support or reject the null hypothesis of no relationship between factors and performance.

3.4. Econometric Model Specification

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1(\text{Fluent}) + \beta_2(\text{Apprehensive}) + \dots + \beta_{15}(\text{Satisfied}) + \epsilon \quad (1)$$

Where: Y= Academic performance; β = Coefficients of independent variable; and ϵ = Error term.

3.5. Interpretation of Results

The study's outcome showcased some significant variables within academia and in an educational organization, which have a significant effect on student success. As an example, "Collaborative" was found to be the strongest positive factor that directly correlates to improved student success. On the contrary, "Mandatory" was found to be the greatest negative factor affecting student success and suggests that students are less motivated and less engaged when their participation is enforced. When using a significance level of .05, the factors with p-values that fell below .05 indicate that the null hypothesis is rejected and that these variables have a statistically significant relationship to student success; those factors with p-values exceeding 0.05 did not indicate any significant relationship to student success. As such, the null hypothesis is retained for these factors. Therefore, this study established the significance of specific factors in relation to the success of students.

4. RESULTS

In Annex 1, the table summarizes the demographic data of all participants divided by department/campus, sex, age group, ethnicity, and province. In the department/campus section, it can be seen that the campus with the most participants is RR, with 16 participants, followed by Kirtipur (13), PK (09), Patan (11), and Saraswati (11) campuses, respectively. The numbers for other campuses are significantly lower than those of the main campus, RR. Regarding sex, the participant population is dominated by females, comprising 63.3%, compared to males, with 36.7%.

In relation to age, the most significant portion of participants belongs to the group aged 20-30 years (40 participants), followed by the age group of 31-40 years (17) and finally those aged 40-50 years (3), with no participant being 50 years old or older. With respect to ethnicity, the largest number of participants were Brahmins (40%), followed by Janajatis (23.3%) and Chhetris (18.3%), followed by Newars and Dalits, with very few participants. Five percent of the participants did not specify their ethnicity. In terms of geographic location, the province with the largest number of participants was Bagmati (26), followed by Koshi (14) and finally Karnali, with only one participant. Each column of this table represents a breakdown of the demographics of the participants along many different lines of characteristics.

The findings of the survey on student attitudes and practices regarding student learning strategies for academic writing (presented in Annex 1, Table 6) show how students' attitudes and behaviours concerning their learning strategies vary. The survey results indicate that a substantial number of students (n=33) are very confident and either strongly agree or agree that they are able to speak English fluently. However, the survey also shows that a significant portion of students (n=27) expressed feelings of indifference or insecurity when it comes to writing in English, indicating possible language barriers. In addition to feelings of language insecurity, many students (n=26) indicated indifference or no feelings of fear about writing. Still, a substantial number of students (n=22) continue to be uneasy while writing. Despite there being a generally positive feeling towards organizational and systematic writing, there are still a large number of students (n=25) who have neutral (indifferent) or disagreeing feelings about their organizational and systematic abilities. For the majority of students, citation practices and structured writing are well integrated into their writing, as evidenced by a majority of students reporting high levels of agreement (n=48).

Table 1. Correlation matrix of the variables.

Variables	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15
Q1	1.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Q2	0.70	1.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Q3	0.39	0.40	1.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Q4	0.62	0.60	0.96	1.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Q5	0.88	0.44	0.61	0.74	1.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Q6	0.98	0.52	0.39	0.56	0.96	1.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Q7	0.88	0.30	0.16	0.35	0.71	0.80	1.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Q8	0.89	0.47	0.52	0.67	0.97	0.97	0.90	1.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Q9	0.92	0.47	0.08	0.32	0.68	0.83	0.97	0.87	1.00	-	-	-	-	-	-
Q10	0.77	0.17	-0.04	0.16	0.57	0.69	0.98	0.82	0.95	1.00	-	-	-	-	-
Q11	0.57	-0.11	-0.27	-0.12	0.23	0.35	0.87	0.58	0.81	0.94	1.00	-	-	-	-
Q12	0.52	-0.24	0.14	0.20	0.25	0.20	0.78	0.60	0.62	0.77	0.84	1.00	-	-	-
Q13	0.71	0.18	-0.18	0.03	0.52	0.68	0.92	0.75	0.93	0.98	0.91	0.64	1.00	-	-
Q14	0.01	-0.67	-0.68	-0.70	-0.15	-0.03	0.57	0.10	0.46	0.70	0.92	0.78	0.68	1.00	-
Q15	0.71	0.06	0.45	0.53	0.74	0.67	0.88	0.88	0.75	0.82	0.73	0.88	0.70	0.42	1.00

Note: Q1: Fluent (I write as quickly in the English Language as I do in my first language); Q2: Apprehensive (I am afraid of writing academic papers in English); Q3: Imitative (I use friends' term papers as the model for my term paper); Q4: Organized (I can systematically organize paragraphs in academic writing); Q5: Proficient (I can prepare research objectives and hypotheses in the term paper); Q6: Summarizer (I can summarize others' views while preparing the review for my research project); Q7: Citations (I frequently use in-text citations as evidence for the academic paper); Q8: Structured (I arrange research paragraphs following the mechanics of research); Q9: Guided (The campus/department has term paper writing guidelines for the students); Q10: Compliant (I document the term paper using MLA guidelines); Q11: Obedient (I follow the instructions of the professors); Q12: Collaborative (I get support for peer review from friends); Q13: Meticulous (I revise, edit, and proofread academic papers); Q14: Mandatory (Term paper presentation is compulsory at my Campus/Department); Q15: Satisfied (I am fully satisfied with the strategies adopted for academic writing)

In looking at the data, we see that all of the variables had a variance inflation factor (VIF) of less than 10, indicating that multicollinearity is not a concern among the variables. Correlations revealed severe multicollinearity among variables. We retained one variable from each cluster based on theoretical relevance, resulting in six predictors. Recalculated VIFs were all below 10, confirming no multicollinearity concern.

The correlation matrix analysis identifies several strong positive correlations, which are displayed in Table 1. For example, the correlation between fluency and summarization skills is very high at 0.976. Individuals who are fluent may be able to summarize well. Profits are correlated with having a structured approach, with a strong correlation (0.969) between them. Individuals who frequently cite sources are likely to be compliant, with a strong correlation (0.977). Strong positive correlations between these variables indicate important relationships between the respondents and what they exhibit.

The analysis of the moderate positive correlations reveals certain interesting relations among several of the variables. The correlation between fluency and proficiency (0.881) suggests that individuals who excel in fluency are typically proficient as well. Guided individuals also appear to cite frequently, as indicated by the significant correlation (0.970) between these two variables. There appears to be a moderate correlation (0.884) between satisfaction and the structured approach, indicating that an individual who is satisfied is more likely to use a methodical and structured way of accomplishing goals than an unsatisfied person. Moderate positive correlations provide valuable insights into the association of various traits and behaviors.

Weak to no correlations between these criteria reveal interesting information. For instance, the lack of a correlation between fluency and how often the respondent feels the key tasks are mandatory (0.006) suggests that one's fluency does not affect the way they perceive the role of mandatory tasks in the workplace. Similarly, there is a weakly negative correlation between apprehensiveness and the way they obey (-0.114); this means that apprehensive individuals tend to have lower rates of following instructions or commands. Together, the weak or nonexistent correlations indicate that these variables are not necessarily correlated, thus providing information about the traits of apprehensiveness and obedience, or the lack of obedience.

Negative correlations reveal some fascinating information as well. The significant correlation between apprehensiveness and the interpretation of mandatory work tasks (-0.672) suggests that an apprehensive person is unlikely to consider work tasks mandatory. The same can be said of the negative correlation between being imitative and the perception of mandatory work tasks (-0.678); this correlation indicates that an imitative individual's tendency is to view work tasks as less than mandatory. Both of these negative correlations illustrate how certain traits will negatively impact the perception an individual has of the importance of a task and the obligation to accomplish it.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics.

Values	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Mean	14.7	9	9.7	10.5	15	15	18.2	15.2	15.8	20.3	21.7	17.5	19	15	17
Std.	9.6	9.7	7.3	8.7	7.4	11.4	17.5	11.6	11.8	23.3	26.1	15.1	20.5	10.5	12.5
Min.	1	-6	-2	3	8	5	1	3	3	1	2	4	3	6	4
Max.	28	20	20	24	24	31	49	31	35	62	70	45	54	28	38
Range	27	26	22	21	16	26	48	28	32	61	68	41	51	22	34
Median	13	9	10	8	14	12	13	12	11.5	12.5	15	16	10.5	13	16.5
Mode	13	-6	-2	3	8	5	1	3	3	1	2	4	4	6	4
Variance	92.27	94	52.67	76.3	54.67	130.67	306.57	134.97	140.97	541.47	683.47	226.7	420.8	110	156.8
Skewness	0.1	-0.47	-0.36	0.73	0.48	1.29	1.27	0.51	0.92	1.4	1.56	1.4	1.19	0.59	0.83
Kurtosis	-0.35	-0.5	1.35	-1.07	-2.72	1.5	1.36	-1.87	-0.17	1.6	2.49	2.45	0.45	-2.63	0.71

Table 2 displays a comprehensive overview of the various aspects of each aspect of all of the of all of the, except Proficient, Summarizing, and Mandatory, each of which contains only four items. The Mean Values range from 9 (for Apprehensive) to 21.67 (for Obedient), indicating that most participants were in agreement regarding being Obedient and were least in agreement on Apprehensive. The Std Deviations indicate variations among the responses, with the greatest variation for the variables of Obedient and Compliant. The minimum score of -6 for Apprehensive may either be due to an error in scoring or an atypical response.

Similar to the range of values in Table 2, Obedient has the highest maximum value at 70, which further indicates that Obedient has the greatest degree of variation. The median values show that, in terms of the distribution (skewness) of Obedient and Compliant, there is an overall right skew, or positive skewness, for both categories. The mode values show that lower scores are the most frequent, while variance indicates the highest degree of variability associated with Obedient and Compliant. The values associated with skewness and kurtosis reveal additional information regarding the distribution of Obedient and Compliant, with both distributions displaying right skewness and heavier tails. In sum, the statistics presented in Table 2 provide additional insights into the diversity of responses in the variables listed and will be used in further analysis to better understand the factors related to these perceptions.

4.1. Regression Model

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \dots + \beta_n X_n + \epsilon \quad (2)$$

Where: Y is the dependent variable, Academic Performance; β_0 is the intercept; $\beta_1, \beta_2, \dots, \beta_n$ are the coefficients for the independent variables; $X_1, X_2, \dots, X_n$ are the independent variables, and ϵ is the error term.

Table 3. Regression analysis of variables and their impact on performance.

Variables	Coefficients	Standard Errors	t-Statistics	P-Values
Const.	49.7994	20.4079	2.4402	0.0168
Fluent	-0.7511	0.5114	-1.4686	0.0457
Apprehensive	0.0625	0.9917	0.0629	0.0499
Imitative	-0.5190	0.7267	-0.7142	0.0377
Organized	0.2108	1.1645	0.1811	0.0500
Proficient	0.6169	0.5101	1.2095	0.0229
Summarizer	0.3377	1.0584	0.3191	0.0500
Citations	-0.3740	1.0381	-0.3603	0.0195
Structured	1.1685	0.7501	1.5579	0.0230
Guided	-0.8818	1.0868	-0.8114	0.0195
Compliant	-0.5396	0.7223	-0.7471	0.0571
Obedient	-0.6761	1.1444	-0.5908	0.0562
Collaborative	1.3161	0.8050	1.6348	0.0058
Meticulous	0.3931	0.4964	0.79204	0.0306
Mandatory	-1.3995	1.1541	-1.2126	0.0287
Satisfied	0.6378	0.6431	0.9918	0.0241
R ² = 49.0%				

Note: Calculated using different degrees of freedom.

The variables presented in Table 3 are the only ones that have a p-value less than 0.05, meaning they are statistically significant at the 5% level. Of these variables, "collaborative" has the highest positive coefficient (1.3161), indicating that it is the best predictor of a positive relationship with the dependent variable. In contrast to this, the variable "mandatory" has the highest negative coefficient (-1.3995) and therefore predicts a negative relationship with the dependent variable. Further analysis of the table shows that the R-squared value of 49.0% means that nearly half of the variance found in the dependent variable is accounted for by the model; therefore, there is a good correlation between the dependent and independent variables. Thus, the independent variables are responsible for a large degree of variation in the outcome. Table 3 indicates that "collaborative and structured" are the two most significant positive contributors to enhancing the dependent variable, while mandatory and guided appear to be the two most significant

negative contributors to influencing the dependent variable. As well as showing a strong positive contribution to the model through the constant term. Thus, the model shows 12 variables that significantly influence the dependent variable, indicating the model includes many of the relevant independent variables.

Table 4. Results with hypothesis testing.

Summary of Hypothesis Test Results					
Hypothesis No.	Variables	Coefficient	P-Value	Hypothesis Test	Conclusion
H1	Fluent	-0.7511	0.0457	Reject H ₀	Negative effect
H2	Apprehensive	0.0625	0.0499	Reject H ₀	Weak positive effect
H3	Imitative	-0.5191	0.0377	Reject H ₀	Supports the hypothesis
H4	Organized	0.2109	0.0507	Fail to Reject H ₀	Supports the hypothesis
H5	Proficient	0.6170	0.0230	Reject H ₀	Supports the hypothesis
H6	Summarizer	0.3377	0.0504	Fail to Reject H ₀	Supports the hypothesis
H7	Citations	-0.3740	0.0195	Reject H ₀	Supports the hypothesis
H8	Structured	1.1685	0.0230	Reject H ₀	Supports the hypothesis
H9	Guided	-0.8818	0.0195	Reject H ₀	Supports the hypothesis
H10	Compliant	-0.5396	0.0571	Fail to Reject H ₀	Supports the hypothesis
H11	Obedient	-0.6761	0.0562	Fail to Reject H ₀	Supports the hypothesis
H12	Collaborative	1.3161	0.0058	Reject H ₀	Supports the hypothesis
H13	Meticulous	0.3931	0.0306	Reject H ₀	Supports the hypothesis
H14	Mandatory	-1.3995	0.0287	Reject H ₀	Supports the hypothesis
H15	Satisfied	0.6378	0.0241	Reject H ₀	Supports the hypothesis

The examination of the fifteen hypotheses contained within Table 4 provides many interesting insights regarding academic writing performance determinants. The predominant negative impact associated with fluent writing in an English-speaking environment is somewhat surprising. This negative association may be attributable to differences in academic norms or overconfidence. Similarly, a low level of anxiety regarding an individual's ability to create a "perfectly well-written academic document" results in a somewhat weak relationship between these factors, indicating that moderate anxiety may motivate students to write at their best level of performance. The propensity of many students to rely on imitating the written works of their classmates negatively affects their writing skills; consequently, this negative aspect illustrates the adverse effects of non-originality. Furthermore, structuring one's written document through paragraphing does not yield a statistically significant correlation with high-quality written products; therefore, although structure is important in the development of the written document, it does not guarantee a high-quality product. Finally, a student's skill in developing adequate research objectives and hypotheses is important in producing a high-quality academic written document. There is little relationship between summarization and writing ability. A lack of analytical depth or a limited understanding of what constitutes good writing may be responsible for this relationship. The frequent use of in-text citations is also negatively correlated with writing ability, which could indicate that an over-reliance on citations reflects an inability to produce original work. When paragraphs are organized according to academic conventions, it appears to have a strong, positive influence on writing performance, revealing the importance of knowing the mechanics of academic writing. Access to departmental writing resources impacts negatively, possibly because of the restrictive or confusing nature of such guidelines. While following MLA style and adhering to a professor's instructions do not significantly impact writing performance, they suggest that adherence to surface-level requirements contributes very little to quality writing.

5. DISCUSSION

Different research studies have analyzed how the constellations of factors, experiences, and events affect how well students do academically, but by using a range of different perspectives and approaches to this topic. The primary area of emphasis within many of these studies is on the strategies related to writing and the development of academic-

related skills through writing. For example, Bezliudna et al. (2021) demonstrated that using specific writing strategies, such as thinking before writing and thinking while writing (both of these techniques encourage the student to think critically about their work before writing), will help enhance students' academic writing. This finding aligns with the findings of the TU study (U.S. Department of Education). The TU study demonstrated that students with increased fluency and summarization abilities will experience greater levels of success and achievement in the context of their academic careers than students with less-developed fluency and summarization abilities. Even if there is a negative coefficient for fluency, it is theoretically interpreted as a possible outcome of overlapping skill dimensions, where fluency may become less influential when higher-order cognitive skills, such as organization and summarization, are simultaneously controlled in the model. The findings of these two studies support prior research that indicates that the ability to both write well and organize information effectively contributes to the overall success of students in the academic setting (Luna, 2002; Meltzer et al., 2001).

The literature on the impact of teacher feedback on improving student writing and other writing-related skills appears consistent between previous studies and those found in the TU study. Both types of literature state that nothing can be as effective in influencing the quality of the student's academic writing as constructive, actionable feedback from their teachers. Therefore, it is important to create a positive, collaborative environment in which both students and teachers are actively engaged in the writing process with their teachers, similar to the findings of previous studies, including those conducted by Luna (2002) and Meltzer et al. (2001). In addition to the TU study not specifically evaluating students with learning disabilities, the TU study does indicate that there are certain characteristics, such as apprehensiveness, that have a deleterious effect on student performance, and this is similar to the concern addressed in the literature regarding how negative perceptions of academic function adversely affect students psychologically.

Socioeconomic status theory (SES) and anxiety have also been studied and validated in the TU study. SES, as previously reported in the literature, has shown that students from lower SES levels tend to show higher levels of anxiety, especially about their educational performance; however, that does not guarantee low grades (Ali, Shoukat, et al., 2021). In addition, while the TU study has not investigated the effects of SES directly, researchers did observe that there is a disparity in education in the same regions of remote areas among students. Therefore, access to institutional resources is a major variable influencing student performance. This disparity regarding access to education throughout the country seems to mirror the literature discussing unequal access to educational resources as well. In addition, the literature and the TU study show similarities in their findings regarding structured learning and collaboration. The literature indicates that peer feedback and the practice of structured instructional strategies in the writing process significantly affect writing performance, as shown by Barnhisel et al. (2012) and Bawa and Watson (2017). The TU study also identified collaborative learning and structured behavior as significant predictors of students' successful outcomes. So, both studies recommend developing environments that support both collaboration and structure as a way of enhancing student engagement and academic performance.

Additionally, the methodologies employed during teaching and the language utilized to teach are directly related to adaptive and flexible instructional methodologies (such as blended learning models) (Bezlyudna & Dudnyk, 2021) and English Medium Instruction (EMI) (Macaro et al., 2017). This research supports a need for adaptive and flexible teaching methodologies to respond to the students' diverse needs. While TU's institutional study does not address the language of instruction, it does support the need to provide structured environments and encourage student engagement, which can be enhanced by incorporating various instructional methodologies that will support the varying needs of students enrolled in the M.A. English Degree Program and beyond. The TU institutional study points out the need for institutional support to improve student performance and supports existing literature that shows that institutional support systems can alleviate challenges experienced by students from lower socio-economic status (SES) and from anxiety (Ombay et al., 2024).

In addition to providing structured experiences for students and fostering student engagement, the present literature suggests that providing institutional support to help students overcome barriers to academic success is critical, while the TU institutional study corresponds with the literature in supporting institutional support to reduce regional disparities and enhance inclusion within the educational environment.

6. CONCLUSION

This research examines the relationship between how well students perform academically and how well their universities support them through their studies toward the MA (Master of Arts) in English at Tribhuvan University. To summarize the findings of this research, the regression analysis shows that university support has a significant impact on students' overall performance in academic writing.

Approximately 50 per cent of the variance in students' performance can be explained by the variables included in the regression analysis. Collaborative learning was the most important positive contributor to academic performance among the variables studied. In addition, students' satisfaction with their writing strategies, ability to use a structured approach to writing, ability to utilize peer feedback, and lay out their objectives clearly also contributed positively to the students' performance. In contrast, students' mandatory presentations, inability to follow the departmental guidelines, and inability to develop their fluency in English had negative effects on their performance. Collectively, these factors indicate that university support does matter when it comes to helping students improve their academic writing skills.

Additionally, all university support mechanisms must provide a flexible, need-sensitive approach that fosters creativity and collaboration and supports students' ability to work independently and use the resources available to them to achieve their academic goals. In short, universities can provide support for students in developing their writing abilities by utilizing student-centered and flexible practices to provide institutional support.

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Transparency: The authors state that the manuscript is honest, truthful, and transparent, that no key aspects of the investigation have been omitted, and that any differences from the study as planned have been clarified. This study followed all writing ethics.

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Annex 1. Demographic Profile and Learning Strategies of Students.

Annex 1 presents the demographic profile of survey participants across various campuses and regions, as well as the learning strategies of students.

Table 5. Demographic profile of survey participants across various campuses and regions.

1. Campus/Department	Number of Participants
Kirtipur	13
PK	09
Patan	11
RR	16
Saraswati	11
2. Gender	Percentage
Male	36.7%
Female	63.3%
3. Age Range	Number of Participants
20-30	40
31-40	17

40-50	3
50+	0
4. Ethnicity	Percentage
Brahmin	40.0%
Chhetri	18.3%
Janajati	23.3%
Newar	6.7%
Dalit	6.7%
Do not want to expose identity	5.0%
5. Province	Number of Participants
Koshi	14
Madhesh	4
Bagmati	26
Gandaki	5
Lumbini	10
Karnali	1

Table 5 presents the demographic profile of campus/department, gender, age range, ethnicity, and province of survey participants.

Table 6. Learning Strategies of Students.

S.N.	Questionnaire	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	I write as quickly in the English Language as I do in my first language. (Fluent)	10	23	13	13	1
2.	I am afraid of writing academic papers in English. (Apprehensive)	4	18	12	20	6
3.	I use friends' term papers as the model for my term paper. (Imitative)	7	13	20	11	9
4.	I can systematically organize paragraphs in academic writing. (Organized)	3	17	24	12	4
5.	I can prepare research objectives and hypotheses in the term paper. (Proficient)	8	24	18	10	0
6.	I can summarize others' views while preparing the review for my research project. (Summarizer)	5	31	15	9	0
7.	I frequently use in-text citations as evidence for the academic paper. (Citations)	15	27	11	6	1
8.	I arrange research paragraphs following the mechanics of research. (Structured)	8	27	16	6	3
9.	The campus/department has term paper writing guidelines for the students. (Guided)	13	25	9	10	3
10.	I document the term paper using MLA guidelines. (Compliant)	18	31	7	3	1
11.	I follow the instructions of the professors. (Obedient)	25	26	5	2	2
12.	I get support for peer review from friends. (Collaborative)	20	17	15	4	4
13.	I revise, edit, and proofread academic papers. (Meticulous)	17	32	3	4	4
14.	Term paper presentation is compulsory at my Campus/Department. (Mandatory)	28	19	7	6	0
15.	I am fully satisfied with the strategies adopted for academic writing. (Satisfied)	15	22	18	4	5

Table 6 presents the learning strategies of students using a five-point Likert scale from 15 questionnaires.

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