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UNRAVELLING THAI EFL UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS' MOTIVATION-ENGAGEMENT PROFILES IN ACADEMIC WRITING ALONG WITH THEIR CHALLENGES

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Abstract
Carrying out academic tasks requires some skills, one of which is writing. In countries where English is regarded as a foreign language, it can be particularly challenging for the students to master this skill since they are EFL beginning learners who are still developing. This requires students to possess good motivation-engagement which can help them to accomplish the demanded tasks. Derived from the rationale, this research aimed to unravel Thai EFL Undergraduate students' motivation-engagement profiles Academic Writing and the challenges. These challenges they encountered might negatively impede their motivation-engagement. This descriptive qualitative research utilized a Likert-scale questionnaire and one section of open-ended questions that were distributed to sixty-eight Xavier Learning Community (XLC) students in Chiang Rai, Thailand. The findings showed that adaptive cognition became the most dominant motivation-engagement profile followed by adaptive behavior, impending cognition, and maladaptive behavior. In addition, it was revealed that the students in XLC showed a good motivation-engagement profile in Academic Writing despite the challenges that they encountered. These challenges include language use, paraphrasing, coherence, and cohesion. The result of this research is beneficial for educators and writing teachers, especially in designing instructions to sustain students' motivation-engagement profiles.

Keywords: academic writing, motivation-engagement, Thai EFL learner

Introduction
One of the skills that students must possess to carry out academic tasks and support learning is writing, including essays and other forms of academic writing (Schillings, Robertsen, Savelberg, & Dolmans, 2023). As if writing academically is not demanding enough, English major students are obliged to write in English. It requires them to possess linguistic knowledge (Choemue & Bram, 2020) and wide-range vocabulary to sharpen their writing skills (Mahardika, 2023). According to Nguyen and Suwannabubpha (2021, p.188), writing is considered "the most

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difficult skill for English as a foreign language (EFL) learners," and therefore adding more challenges for students without learning motivation.

Qazem and Zayid (2019) argued that many EFL learners often become confused since they are beginning writers who are still developing. This became particularly challenging for students in countries such as Vietnam, Indonesia, Thailand, and other countries that use and learn either English as a second language (ESL) or English as a foreign language (EFL) in their day-to-day lives (Averina, 2024; Mahardika & Ena, 2022; Sanjaya & Bram, 2021). In Thailand, English has a unique status and set of functions. While some think English is unimportant, others spend years studying it and are still unable to use it well. It happened because English is regarded as a foreign language that is not used in Thai's immediate context (Dueraman, 2012). According to Glass (2007), this condition made curriculum both in the private and public schools in Thailand include little or no writing. Consequently, Thai students find it difficult to use English as they are not fully equipped and prepared for writing at higher levels in English. Despite this condition, Academic Writing is needed in some higher educational institutions. Students taking an Academic Writing course at a university are expected to be able to make logical reasoning, connect arguments to the findings of relevant studies, and encounter arguments (Al-Badi, 2015). Additionally, students must follow writing guidelines based on general academic writing procedures, such as those pertaining to logical structure, synthesis, quotes, summaries, grammar, mechanics, and avoiding plagiarism (Listyani & Budjalemba, 2021).

The gaps between what is expected from the students and students' lack of basic skills in Academic Writing have resulted in the emergence of challenges or problems. Previous studies pointed out that Thai students still posed relatively low language proficiency, low level of motivation, low basic knowledge in writing for academic purposes, and coherence and cohesion problems (Al-Badi, 2015; Bowen et al., 2023; Dueraman, 2012; Khonamri et al., 2021). Moreover, English is even regarded as a 'fearsome subject' in Thailand, adding more challenges for educators since this also causes low motivation among students. This lack of motivation then has been recognized as a main challenge for students in improving their English proficiency amongst Thai students, particularly in the rural areas (Kaur, Young, & Kirkpatrick, 2016).

Motivation and engagement in language learning

Challenges and difficulties are inevitable in the process of learning. However, the level of motivation that the students have will determine their commitment and effort in the process, later affecting the result and the success of learning. It is supported by Dörnyei (2005) who stated that motivation becomes the driving force for beginning L2 acquisition, which also sustains the lengthy and frequently tedious learning process.

Motivation and engagement have become the two most essential predicting factors that contribute to the success of language learning (Radfar & Lengkanawati, 2020; Schunk, 2003; Teng & Zhang, 2017). Previous related literature highlighted the close interrelatedness between motivation and engagement (Martin, 2012a; Yu et al., 2019). Motivation that serves as an internal psychological factor constitutes private and unobservable factors; meanwhile, engagement constitutes publicly observable behaviors manifested in a person's level of involvement and effort in

executing a task (Oga-Baldwin & Fryer, 2020a). To bridge the gap and help us understand a more nuanced result that encompasses the cognitive, affective, and behavioral components of a learner, "the English Writing Motivation and Engagement Scale" (Martin, 2012a) was adjusted by Yu et al. (2019) to fit in the Academic Writing context and could be used as a guideline.

The cognitive component describes students' mental and cognitive investment in comprehending information and ideas and completing tasks (Lee et al., 2018). "The affective component focuses on students' affective and emotional responses to their instructors, peers, and institutions" (Yu et al., 2019, p.130). Meanwhile, the behavioral component refers to the degree to which students become involved in tasks and activities, as well as their observable behaviors and performance. "The English Writing Motivation and Engagement Scale" consists of two levels. The first level, first-order factors, distinguishes between behavioral and cognitive components, including work involving adaptive cognition, impending cognition, adaptive behavior, and maladaptive behavior. Meanwhile, the second-order factors, show how different components of motivation and engagement have varying empirical strengths. The diagram of the motivation-engagement wheel is presented in Figure 1.

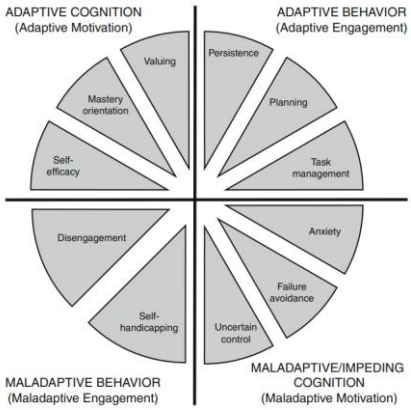


Figure 1. Motivation and engagement wheel (Martin, 2012b)

(1) Adaptive cognition reflects students' positive attitudes, perception, orientation, and commitment towards Academic Writing which includes valuing, mastery orientation, and self-efficacy. (2) Adaptive behavior indicates students' positive behavior, involvement, and performance in Academic Writing which includes persistence, planning, and task management. (3) Maladaptive/impending cognition infers to students' negative attitudes and perspectives that impede them in accomplishing Academic Writing tasks which includes anxiety, failure avoidance, and uncertain control. (4) Maladaptive behavior reflects students' problematic behavior that negatively affects the writing outcomes which includes self-handicapping and disengagement.

Previous studies have attempted to map students' motivation-engagement profiles in the EFL context. However, less attention and effort were given to exploring Thai EFL undergraduate students' motivation-engagement profiles in Academic Writing as a specific discipline or course along with their challenges. Undergraduate students in the Xavier Learning Community were specifically chosen in this research. Xavier Learning Community as an educational institution

that started as a mission school made it a compelling and intriguing setting due to its differences compared to EFL undergraduate students in other higher education.

Xavier learning community

Xavier Learning Community (XLC) was established in 2017 by the Jesuits in Chiang Rai with the mission to build a culturally diverse learning institution that provides learning opportunities for young Indigenous students in Northern Thailand (Choemue & Muljani, 2021). As a part of the Jesuit foundation, XLC has a mission to help students become men and women for others with their cultural heritage still rooted in them (Arrupe, 2018; Ruankool, 2022).

When it was first established, XLC was not yet a college. That being said, the official classes for XLC students came from Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University (STOU). In 2023, XLC officially became a part of Saengtham College and was renamed Saengtham College Xavier Campus Chiang Rai. At the time of the research, there were three active programs in XLC. In the first program, three batches of students (2020, 2021, and 2022) were learning from the STOU Curriculum. Secondly, one batch (2023) was the first batch who were officially registered as Saengtham College students. The other program was a group of seminarians in the Xavier Immersion Program (XIP) who come from various dioceses across Thailand. XIP seminarians are not undergraduate students, thus the reason they are not included.

This institution has the students live and learn together with the dorms and campus in one site. Therefore, not only do the students attend academic classes for their degree but they also share daily group activities, including gardening, cooking, farming, and house-cleaning to take care of the community, as well as sports, tutoring with native speakers, and voluntary work in nearby villages. The concept of a 'learning community' endorsed that learning happens dynamically inside and outside the classroom as a transformative journey (Ruankool, 2022) that embodies the spirit of Jesuit 'to love and to serve' along with a reflective approach based on Jesuit education. The students are accompanied by 6 Jesuit priests, 3 Jesuit brothers, 3 religious Sisters, 6 full-time teachers, and 6 non-teaching staff. Schools under the Jesuit Foundation attempt to provide a holistic education which benefits the individual involved and society (Jaramillo, 2024). According to Trinidad (2023), the Jesuits emphasized providing a universally good service in education that distinguishes not just right from wrong, but also the better choices.

To partially fill the gap in the literature, this study aimed to map Thai students' motivation-engagement along with the challenges that they encountered during the process. It is essential to address participants' challenges in Academic Writing and help them to overcome the problems as these can negatively impact their motivation-engagement in Academic Writing. To achieve the aforementioned aims, the researchers formulated two research questions, namely:

(1) What are Thai EFL Undergraduate students' motivation-engagement profiles in Academic Writing?
(2) What challenges do Thai EFL undergraduate students encounter in Academic Writing?

Discovering students' motivation-engagement in Academic Writing can shed light on how to make L2 writers more motivated and engaged in the subject so that

researchers, administrative officers, and writing instructors can utilize the results as references in their development of L2 Academic Writing instruction. Furthermore, the findings of this research can give insights into better methods in the teaching-learning practice in classrooms to make the lesson more meaningful.

Method

To answer the two proposed research questions, the researchers adhered to a descriptive qualitative research design. The purpose of the descriptive qualitative study is to help researchers understand a particular phenomenon by offering descriptive descriptions compiled from a variety of data collection methods, including questionnaires, interviews, and observation (Ary et al., 2010).

To obtain general descriptions of the issues being discussed, a close-ended questionnaire in the form of a Likert scale containing 44 items and an open-ended questionnaire containing 7 items were administered. Descriptive qualitative research was suitable to the nature of the current study as this study involved a small number of individuals so that the participants' personal insights and points of view can be obtained and interpreted deeply to understand a particular phenomenon (Creswell, 2002, p. 16).

This research was conducted in Xavier Learning Community (XLC), an educational institution under the Jesuit Foundation in Chiang Rai, Thailand. XLC was established as a response to the needs of poor Indigenous students (Ruankool, 2022). To opt for the participants of this research, the researchers employed a purposive sampling method. Purposive sampling is a research procedure to opts for the sample of the research by setting particular characteristics under a specific purpose that is relevant to the study (Andrade, 2020). The researchers chose 68 students from Xavier Learning Community (XLC), Thailand. Those students enrolled in different programs or batches as follows:

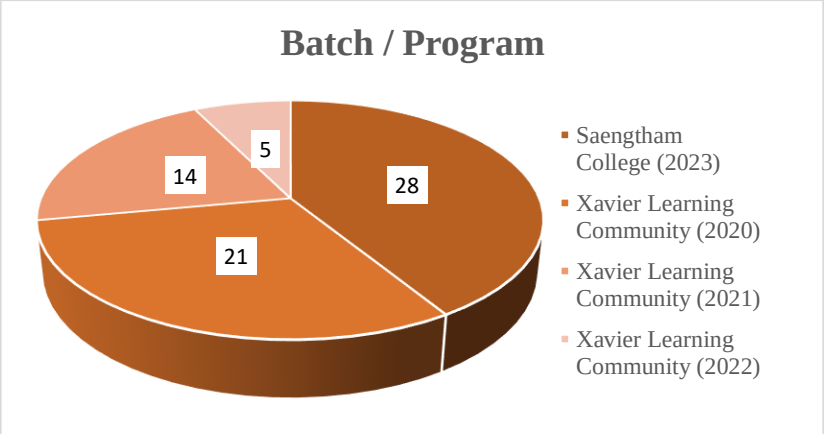


Figure 2. Participants' batch/program

The participants also came from diverse cultural backgrounds. Since 2023, XLC started to admit students from neighboring countries. The data shows that a small portion of the total population came from Laos (4%) and Myanmar (6%) and the rest is Thai. Students in XLC also came from various ethnic groups. The two biggest groups are Karen (57%) and Akha (19%). Other ethnicities in XLC include Thai, Laos, Hmong, Kachin, Lahu, and Lanna. However, they all had one thing in

common, which is the majority of the participants (51 students) consider English as a foreign language (75% of the population). Fifty percent of the population speaks Karen as their first language. The complete demographic data of the participants can be seen in Figure 2.

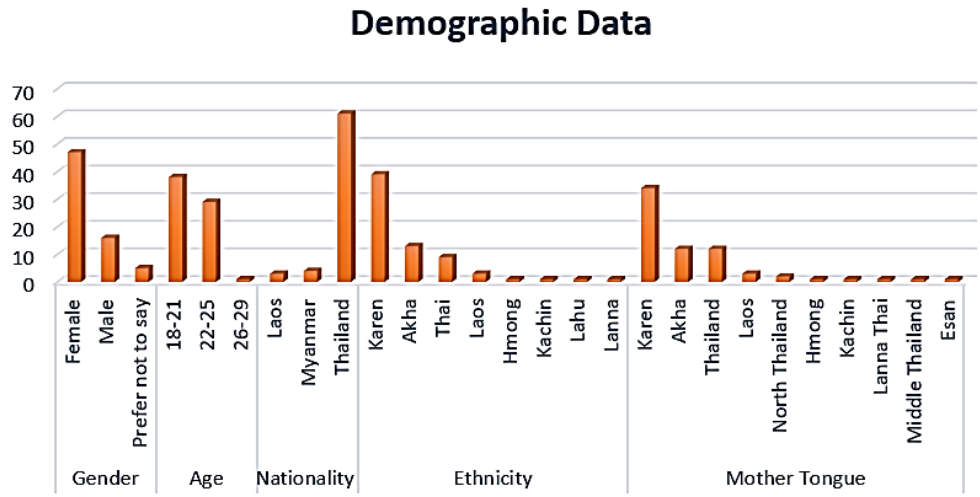


Figure 3. Participants' demographic information

To investigate participants' motivation-engagement profiles in Academic Writing along a Likert scale and an open-ended questionnaire. The 44 items of the close-ended questionnaire were adapted from "the English Writing Motivation and Engagement Scale for University/College Students or EW-MES-UC" developed by Martin (2012). This instrument has also already been used by Yu et al. (2019) to measure Chinese EFL undergraduate students' motivation and engagement in the Academic Writing context. Henceforth, in this study, the instrument would be referred to as "the English Writing Motivation and Engagement Scale." The five-point Likert scale questionnaire is divided into two level factors ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". The first-order factor consists of adaptive cognition, adaptive behavior, maladaptive behavior, and impending cognition. Meanwhile, the second-order factors consist of three aspects each. The questionnaires were distributed to batches 2020, 2021, and 2022 in the odd semester. Meanwhile, for batch 2023, the questionnaires were distributed in the even semester. To ensure ethical conduct, a consent form was given beforehand; thus, the participants' involvement in the research was voluntary. The blueprint of the questionnaire can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Questionnaire blueprint

Questionnaire	First-Order Factors	Second-Order Factors	Number of Items
English Writing Motivation and Engagement Scale for University/College Students	Adaptive Cognition	Valuing	1,2,3,4
		Mastery Orientation	5,6,7,8
		Self-Efficacy	9,10,11,12
	Adaptive Behavior	Persistence	13,14,15,16
		Planning	17,18,19,20
		Task Management	21, 22, 23, 24
	Maladaptive Behavior	Disengagement	25, 26, 27, 28
		Self-Handicapping	29, 30, 31, 32

Questionnaire	First-Order Factors	Second-Order Factors	Number of Items
	Impending Cognition	Anxiety	33, 34, 35, 36
		Failure Avoidance	37, 38, 39, 40
		Uncertain Control	41, 42, 43, 44

An English language education expert whose first language is Thai was involved in reviewing and cross-checking the questionnaire items to ensure the readability and quality of the instrument. Some adjustments were made by simplifying the language and conforming to the cultural context. The researcher also utilized SPSS 25 to ensure the reliability of the items by calculating the *Cronbach Alpha* coefficient. The reliability statistics test revealed that the *Cronbach Alpha* coefficient of the questionnaire was .921. Dornyei and Taguchi (2010) stipulated that a questionnaire is deemed reliable if its *Cronbach Alpha* coefficient is higher than .70.

To ensure triangulation, 7 open-ended questions were also given to delve deep into the unheard voices of (1) participants' general perceptions of Academic Writing, (2) their expectations before and after enrolling in English Academic Writing class, (3) the challenges that they encountered, and (4) the strategies that they have employed to overcome the challenges.

The numerical data obtained from the closed-ended questionnaire was analyzed using descriptive statistics to determine the participants' motivation, engagement, and issues with academic writing. Data analysis in sequence was done during this process. Utilizing SPSS 25, the data collected from the questionnaire were analyzed under descriptive statistics to determine the central tendency of the data as a percentage, mean score, and standard deviation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In the meantime, the researchers read the open-ended questionnaire responses several times in order to become fully immersed in the data. The data were subsequently identified and analyzed under a thematic qualitative analysis. Open codes were generated based on the interpretation of the qualitative data obtained through open-ended questions to find the emergent prominent themes (Creswell, 2002). The sample of the coding process is shown in Table 2. These codes were then categorized in accordance with the objective of the study.

Table 2. Sample of coding process

Code	Description	Excerpt
Challenges in Academic Writing	Finding relevant and reliable references.	I sometimes end up putting too many irrelevant details that make my writing lack focus. It is difficult to use only essential and relevant information in my essay" (P.37/OEQ).

As for data presentation, the participants' responses to the open-ended questions were labeled OEQ (Open-ended questions). Eventually, the numerical and qualitative data were combined and expanded upon to create strong and thorough findings.

Findings and Discussion

The responses from "the English Writing Motivation and Engagement Scale" are summarized and further discussed in this section to answer each research question formulated previously. The first part of this section demonstrates

participants' profiles of their motivation-engagement in Academic Writing. Meanwhile, the second part points out the challenges they encountered during the process.

Motivation-engagement profile in academic writing

Participants' motivation-engagement profile comprises two levels. The first level, first-order factors, distinguishes between behavioral and cognitive components, including work involving adaptive cognition, impending cognition, adaptive behavior, and maladaptive behavior in Academic Writing processes. Meanwhile, the second-order factors, show how different components of motivation and engagement have varying empirical strengths. This encompasses "self-efficacy, mastery orientation, valuing, persistence, planning, task management, disengagement, self-handicapping, anxiety, failure avoidance, and uncertain control" (Martin, 2012b, p.14) . From the questionnaire, it was found that adaptive cognition ($\bar{x}$ =64.58) became the most dominant motivation-engagement profile followed by adaptive behavior ($\bar{x}$ =45.90), impending cognition ($\bar{x}$ =42.12), and maladaptive behavior ($\bar{x}$ = 25.03).

Table 3. Participants' adaptive cognition

Factors		Disagreement (Strongly Disagree to Disagree)		Neutral		Agreement (Agree to Strongly Agree)		Mean
		N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)	
Adaptive Cognition		58	7.11	231	28.31	527	64.58	46.28
1	Valuing	20	7.35	67	24.63	185	68.01	15.81
2	Mastery Orientation	15	5.51	60	22.06	197	72.43	16.03
3	Self-Efficacy	23	8.46	104	38.24	145	53.31	14.44

Table 3 represents participants' dominant adaptive cognition as mastery orientation ($\bar{x}$ =16.03) followed by valuing ($\bar{x}$ =15.81) and self-efficacy ($\bar{x}$ =14.44), respectively. Mastery orientation refers to students' orientation in improving and developing their proficiency and knowledge mastery in writing. From the questionnaire, 72.43% of students agreed and strongly agreed that they wanted to do well in the writing class because it was important to show their ability to their family, friends, lecturers, future employers, or others. In addition, they also had a strong urge to improve their overall grade point average, one of the ways was to get good scores in Academic Writing. They also perceived feedback given by lecturers or more knowledgeable peers as beneficial to help them improve the quality of their writing.

The second most dominant adaptive cognition was valuing. Valuing refers to students' personal judgment about the relevance, usefulness, and importance of the academic writing work they engage in. 68.01% of students agreed and strongly agreed that learning Academic Writing was beneficial for some plausible reasons. They put more effort into studying Academic Writing because they simply enjoyed writing, they knew this skill would be beneficial for their future academic pursuit and career, they wanted to pass the final test as this course was mandatory in the curriculum, and they wanted to get satisfying results in the standardized test such as IELTS, TOEFL, TOEIC, etc. Self-efficacy became the third adaptive cognition factor reported by the participants. Self-efficacy refers to students' self-confidence

and personal belief in their capability to overcome challenges or problems and perform well in writing class. 53.31% of students agreed and strongly agreed that they were confident with their strengths and the available resources that they could use to help them finish Academic Writing assignments. They did positive self-talk as self-encouragement whenever they felt discouraged in finishing their writing task. They also reminded themselves that the writing assignment could be finished as planned as long as they followed the schedule.

It is also supported by the results gathered from the open-ended questionnaire. Some of them mentioned:

> *I think writing in English is quite enjoyable, especially if I am asked to write something that I like or I am familiar with the topic, because I'd like to share my thoughts with the readers* (P.54/OEQ)

> *Even though my writing skills are not really good, I think writing in English is very important for my future study and career. I personally like reading and to be able to write well, I do quite extensive reading to get more ideas, and it has improved my writing greatly.* (P.42/OEQ)

Table 4. Participants' adaptive behavior

Aspects		Disagreement (Strongly Disagree to Disagree)		Neutral		Agreement (Agree to Strongly Agree)		Mean
		N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)	
Adaptive Behavior		56	6.86	226	27.70	534	65.44	45.90
4	Persistence	12	4.41	62	22.79	198	72.79	16.03
5	Planning	24	8.82	79	29.04	169	62.13	14.85
6	Task Management	20	7.35	85	31.25	167	61.40	15.01

Table 4 shows participants' adaptive behavior in Academic Writing. It was shown that the students were mostly persistent ($\bar{x}$ =16.03), made careful planning ($\bar{x}$ =14.85), and managed the writing task well ($\bar{x}$ =15.01). Persistence refers to the extent to which the students sustain their engagement and maintain their effort. 72.79 % of the students agreed and strongly agreed that if they encountered difficulties in finishing writing tasks, they made an effort to ask for help from their more knowledgeable friends or lecturers. They also invested more effort in using all possible skills, strategies, and resources to do and finish their academic writing tasks. Even when they did poorly on previous writing tests/tasks, they tried to learn from their mistakes and improve themselves. Planning as adaptive behavior refers to the extent to which the students set the goal and plan their academic tasks to achieve the intended writing goal. 62.13% of students agreed and strongly agreed that they set the goal to determine the quality of their writing, used strategies to finish their academic writing tasks by following the steps of the "drafting-writing-reviewing" process, made the timeline to distribute the tasks and ensure to finish them well before the deadline. Moreover, if their initial plan did not work, they could flexibly arrange and adjust the new writing timeline.

In addition, in terms of how well the students arrange their plans and execute their strategies to accomplish the writing task, 61.40% of students agreed and strongly agreed that they thought of interesting ways to make the process of writing more fun and less monotonous, seek a quiet place where they could write and

concentrate, focused more on utilizing available resources instead of pondering on the problems, and even gave self-reward after successfully finishing academic writing assignments to motivate oneself. The result from the open-ended questionnaire also yielded a similar result:

> *Whenever I encounter mind blockage, I simply sit down or meditate for a few minutes to get back to thinking about the ideas I want to write. The other things that I usually do are reading books, finding more information on the internet, and asking friends or lecturers.* (P.7/OEQ)

> *Sometimes I get overwhelmed by Academic Writing tasks, to overcome this, I made a target so that I can finish it before the deadline. I also always make sure that I have time to recheck my work before submitting it* (P.37/OEQ)

> *Sometimes we need to face something difficult because we need to learn something new. Academic Writing is definitely something new for me; thus, whenever I feel like quitting, I always encourage myself that I can do it and practice more*. (P. 36/OEQ)

Table 5. Participants' impending cognition

Aspects	Disagreement (Strongly Disagree to Disagree)		Neutral		Agreement (Agree to Strongly Agree)		Mean
	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)	
Impending Cognition	135	16.54	263	32.23	418	51.23	42.12
10 Anxiety	42	15.44	81	29.78	149	54.78	14.54
11 Failure Avoidance	34	12.50	90	33.09	148	54.41	14.19
12 Uncertain Control	59	21.69	92	33.82	121	44.49	13.38

Table 5 pinpoints participants' impending cognition which encompasses anxiety ($\bar{x}$ =14.54), failure avoidance ($\bar{x}$ =14.19), and uncertain control ($\bar{x}$ =13.38). Anxiety can be defined as the level of apprehension experienced by students whenever they think or do academic writing-related tasks. 54.78% of students agreed and strongly agreed that they felt uneasy or worried whenever they faced upcoming writing exams and assignments. They also felt overwhelmed and stressed whenever they had to write a piece of writing for academic purposes. As a result, their mind seemed to go blank whenever they started working on my academic paper with a topic that they were not familiar with, and had difficulty maintaining their focus once they felt confused or overwhelmed. Furthermore, they also had the tendency to develop failure avoidance or the attempt to maintain motivation and engagement and sustain the effort by thinking about negative consequences that follow from external factors if the goals cannot be attained. 54.41% of students agreed and strongly agreed that they thought about some possible negative consequences if they did not do their best effort in Academic Writing class. Often the main reason why they finished academic writing tasks was because they did not want to disappoint their parents or their lecturers.

Lastly, uncertain control as impending cognition was also reported by the students. Impending cognition refers to the extent to which students are oblivious of their current writing proficiency level and uncertain about how to do well or how to avoid doing poorly. 44.49 % of students agreed and strongly agreed that they

were unsure in which area of writing skill they were lack of, and they sometimes were unsure of how to improve their writing proficiency effectively. It was shown when they got a bad mark in writing they were often unsure how they were going to avoid getting that mark again. Sometimes even when they thought that they have had practiced enough or done writing assignments optimally, they still got unsatisfactory results. The results were also in accordance with the students' responses to the open-ended questionnaire:

> *I often think of my parents whenever I was thinking about giving up or getting bad scores. I don't want to fail this class and disappoint people who have supported me* (P.4/OEQ)

> *I initially think that I have tried my best by practicing frequently, but sometimes I feel discouraged when I get bad results* (P.25/OEQ)

> *I still cannot find the best way to improve my writing skills. This makes me overthink. For me, writing is just hard and complicated. It is sometimes stressful and frustrating at the same time*. (P.43/OEQ)

Table 6. Participants' maladaptive behavior

	Aspects	Disagreement (Strongly Disagree to Disagree)		Neutral		Agreement (Agree to Strongly Agree)		Mean
		N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)	
Maladaptive Behavior		141	25.92	203	37.32	200	36.76	25.03
7	Disengagement	71	26.10	106	38.97	95	34.93	12.43
8	Self-Handicapping	70	25.74	97	35.66	105	38.60	12.60

Table 6 represents participants' maladaptive behavior which includes self-handicapping ($\bar{x}$ = 12.60) and disengagement ($\bar{x}$ = 12.43). Self-handicapping can be defined as the extent to which students compromise their chances of accomplishing writing tasks or academic success in general so they have excuses if they perform poorly. 38.60% of students were found to have this maladaptive behavior. This behavior made the students avoid practicing or studying hard before writing exams so they had an excuse if they did not do as well as they hoped, had the tendency to procrastinate in finishing writing tasks and end up finishing them last minute, got distracted with a lot of things during the writing process, and blamed the lack of resources that made them unable to finish their writing assignments or get a good result in writing tests. Meanwhile, disengagement refers to students' tendency or inclination to give up their writing tasks or writing goals. Only 34.93% of the students reported that when the writing process was dull and difficult, they stopped doing it even if it was incomplete. They also thought that when the writing demand was too high, they lost motivation to finish it. In addition, when writing work was hard they also admitted to either giving up or doing only the easy parts. The results from the open-ended questionnaire also found a similar phenomenon:

> *For me writing is boring, but it is needed to pass the exam* (P.67/OEQ)

> *I admit that I procrastinate a few times, especially when I don't have any idea what to write or when the topic is too difficult* (P.14/OEQ)

Challenges in academic writing

Before unraveling the challenges encountered by the participants, the researchers attempted to explore participants' general perception of Academic Writing. In the questionnaire, the participants could opt for more than one challenge based on what they have experienced thus far. The result showed that despite the high level of motivation and engagement, the students still perceived Academic Writing as difficult and challenging (43%). Some of the students admitted that writing became the most difficult skill in English "*English is hard, especially writing. I am pretty good at reading and speaking, but when it comes to writing, I realize that it is not my strongest skill*" (P.13/OEQ). "*Writing is difficult for me especially when I have to write about something that I am not familiar with*" (P.11/OEQ). Another participant mentioned that writing particularly for academic purposes in English as a foreign language is challenging "*English is not my native language, so expressing ideas using English in written form for academic purposes is difficult for me, even if I have tried my best to do it*" (P.50/OEQ). The overview of the participants' general perception of Academic Writing can be seen in Figure 3.

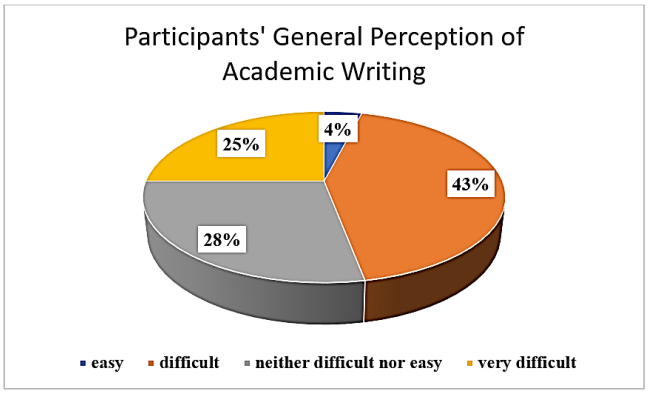


Figure 4. Participants' general perception of academic writing

Based on participants' responses to the questionnaire, it was found that there were eight major challenges encountered by the participants in Academic Writing which encompassed language use, paraphrasing, coherence & cohesion, referencing & citation, expressing voice, choosing a significant topic, finding a relevant reference, and grammar & spelling. The summary of the major challenges is presented in Figure 5.

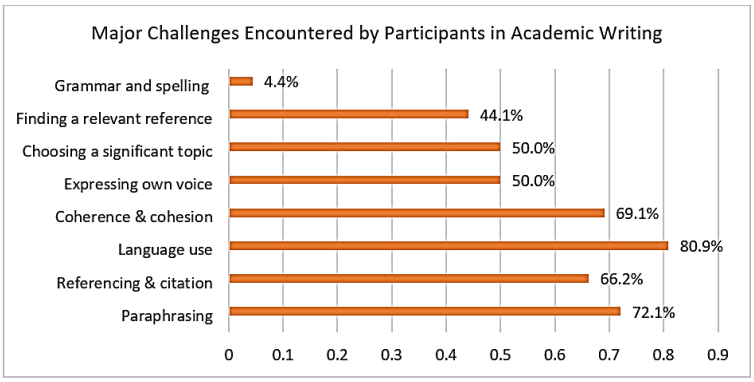


Figure 5. Participants' challenges in writing for academic purposes

The three major challenges found were language use (80.9%), paraphrasing (72.1%), and coherence & cohesion (69.1%). In most cases, writers want to produce a work of writing with well-chosen vocabulary, logically connected sentences, clearly articulated ideas, and cohesive paragraphs. In addition, it's crucial to become proficient at paraphrasing, particularly for academic writing as a way to avoid plagiarism. Since plagiarism is seen as "a crime" in the academic community, it must be avoided at all costs. According to the data collected from the students' responses, a significant number of them were aware of these requirements for academic writing, yet they found it challenging to comply with them. One of them stated "*Writing for academic purposes requires a wide range of formal vocabulary or academic words. I am aware that my vocabulary is still limited, thus, it is sometimes difficult to express the ideas in writing*" (P.40/OEQ). Another participant expressed his difficulties as "*writing is different from speaking. It is often difficult to logically connect ideas and organize them in a comprehensible manner*" (P.36/OEQ).

The subsequent challenges that were still prevalent among Thai EFL undergraduate students were referencing & citing other people's work (66.2%), choosing a significant topic (50%), and expressing their voices through a piece of Academic Writing (50%). Students seemed to find it challenging to find their own voice, put their ideas into words, and establish a balance between what they read and their own opinions until they eventually incorporated the ideas of other writers into their own perspectives. One of them mentioned "*Determining the topic to write is hard, but it is even harder to develop the topic into a complete essay by incorporating the proponents' theory and my own understanding*" (P.61/OEQ). Another participant still struggled with the basic rules of referencing and citation "*Even though we have learned about how to cite and put references, I admit that I am still confused*" (P.13/OEQ).

The last two challenges found from the participants were finding relevant sources (44.1%) and grammar & spelling (4.4%). The participants were still unable to select the appropriate literature from the wealth of publications available. Their inability to choose reliable and relevant sources to support their writing could be attributed to their lack of awareness and understanding of the depth and scope of the topic they were discussing. In addition, the mechanical aspects which constituted grammar, spelling, and punctuation still became the issues considering participants' low level of writing proficiency. One of them stated "*My poor grammar, punctuation, and spelling often hinder me from constructing logical and well-written sentences in my writing. I usually overcome it by using online tools like Grammarly, but it becomes an issue when I have to do on-site paper-based writing tests*" (P.64/OEQ). Another student expressed his issues with choosing reliable and relevant sources "*I sometimes end up putting too many irrelevant details that make my writing lack a focus. It is difficult to use only essential and relevant information in my essay*" (P.37/OEQ).

Discussion

The results from the closed and open-ended questionnaire showed that the majority of the students had a high level of motivation and engagement. The results of the current study are supported by previous studies in the scope of EFL learning (Li et al., 2022; Liu & Oga-Baldwin, 2022; Oga-Baldwin & Fryer, 2020b, 2020a).

The present study found that adaptive cognition ($\bar{x}$ =64.58) became the most dominant motivation-engagement profile followed by adaptive behavior ($\bar{x}$ =45.90), impending cognition ($\bar{x}$ =42.12), and maladaptive behavior ($\bar{x}$ = 25.03). The findings are in line with the study conducted by Li et al. (2022) that investigated Chinese undergraduate students in three different universities in which English was their foreign language. The results revealed that the "motivated and engaged" cohort demonstrated the most adaptive cognitive and behaviors. On the contrary, the "demotivated and disengaged" cohort exhibited the opposite pattern. Similar results delving deep into gender differences pinpointed that male students were more likely to demonstrate lower quality of motivation compared to their female counterparts (Oga-Baldwin & Fryer, 2020a). In addition, male students tended to be externally motivated; meanwhile, female students were more inclined to be internally regulated and motivated. Female students with a high-quality level of motivation were more likely to demonstrate more adaptive results which encompass autonomy and self-regulation. On the contrary, male students with a low-quality level of motivation were more often associated with maladaptive outcomes.

Contrary to the results of the present study, a low level of motivation in writing was found among EFL secondary learners in Hong Kong (Lee et al., 2018). In addition, the result showed that as the students moved to higher grades, their writing efficacy tended to decrease. This emerged due to the fact that the students often received feedback that focused primarily on language errors marked by red ink on their writing work without providing constructive feedback and strategies on how the students could improve their writing. This resulted in a decrease in motivation, self-efficacy, and engagement in writing. Another similar result was also found among EFL undergraduate students in one of the public Universities in Samarinda, Indonesia (Toba et al., 2019). The study revealed that the low level of writing motivation and negative writing perception, accompanied by writing anxiety and the lack of writing practice became the contributing factors that impeded their Academic Writing efficacy and proficiency.

This present study involved 68 students from Xavier Learning Community (XLC), Chiang Rai, Thailand who majored in the English department. Despite their writing proficiency and the complex nature of Academic Writing, the students in the present study were reported to acquire a good motivation-engagement profile in Academic Writing. There were at least two plausible explanations for this. First of all, drawing from the value of the institution, Xavier Learning Community (XLC) as a community of learning has a robust humanistic approach known as *Cura Personalis* as a foundation of the Jesuit educational institution (Ruankool, 2022). This essential principle enables students to build up a 'growth character' that equips them beyond mere abstract or speculative knowledge and helps them to grow holistically as whole persons (Ruankool, 2022). This principle is embodied in the way the teachers provided personalized mentorship and supported students' gradual progress. Personalized feedback from the teachers and the reflective narration assignment assist their meaning-making process. This value builds positive attitudes toward learning that can move beyond conventional learning.

In this context, "learning" refers to more than just the process of picking up new information and transferring knowledge. Instead, it starts with the belief that the students can always learn something new and more from others, together with an attitude of openness to new and varied knowledge (Harrison et al., 2023). This

value and humanistic approach employed in the institution enabled them to have high adaptive cognition which included mastery orientation, valuing, and self-efficacy despite their proficiency in English Academic Writing, It is supported by Martin (2012) which stipulated that students adaptive cognition and behavior reflected their positive attitudes, behavior, orientation, and engagement toward learning in general.

Another Jesuit value that encourages students' progress and academic writing is called *magis*. This value is defined as striving for excellence (Keating & Platonov, 2024), including academic excellence (Lynch, Meyer, Mizak, Adamczak, & Scott, 2012). Living with the *magis* value encourages students to pursue beyond what they can do, including going beyond their capability, producing writing assignments that reflect their pursuit of the greater good. When the students are encouraged to perceive writing as one of the tools to make intellectual contributions and spread social awareness, they are more likely to get deeply engaged. This aligns with how the Jesuits value fosters their students to be 'men and women for others' who are aware that giving back to society is one of their responsibilities (Clarence & Jena, 2023). These values are deeply ingrained and can be seen in how students made their best effort in submitting their writing assignment, despite the challenges they faced.

Secondly, teaching approaches and methodologies, including process-oriented ones by emphasizing online individualized corrective feedback used by the lecturers in Academic Writing classes at XLC also played an important role in enhancing Thai undergraduate students' motivation-engagement in L2 writing. The provision of individualized feedback was found to increase students' motivation and positive perception in general (Li & Li, 2012). The present study also found that self-efficacy as part of participants' dominant adaptive cognition was enhanced as a result of the implementation of online individualized corrective feedback in the class. It is supported by Kormos (2012) who stipulated that there was a relationship between the emergence of motivation and self-efficacy beliefs. Through the feedback, learners received high regard for their performance. As a result of their trust and confidence in their capacity to complete the assignment, students started to show motivation in it. Studies also revealed that when the teacher gave personalized feedback and discussed various types of feedback strategies that the students preferred the lecturer to apply, the students started to feel satisfied with the feedback they were receiving and invested more effort in using all possible skills, strategies, and resources to revise, improve, and finish their academic writing tasks (Trabelsi, 2019; Tsao, 2021).

Nonetheless, the current findings also found that a low level of impending cognition and maladaptive behavior was still reported among the participants. Presumably, it happened due to the complex nature of Academic Writing. Previous related research has highlighted this phenomenon. Writing for academic purposes is a complex, painstaking, and time-consuming process since it involves multiple complex cognitive processes (Al-Badi, 2015). Furthermore, writing academic papers in a foreign language is arguably more challenging since the students need to focus not only on the content organization but also on the grammar, punctuation, diction, and vocabulary of the target language (Al-Badi, 2015; Arju, 2018). The participants may feel quite nervous or anxious and unsure of how to improve their English writing skills when faced with writing assignments and exams. This

happened because writing particularly was deemed more difficult than other English skills like reading and listening (Negari, 2011). However, they must continue attending English writing classes in order to improve their exam scores and avoid disappointing their lecturers and parents. Therefore, it was possible and plausible that these students were both adaptively and maladaptively motivated and engaged in English Academic Writing. It is supported by Yu et al. (2019) who argued that it's feasible that both adaptive and maladaptive aspects of writing motivation and engagement existed at the same time. In order to gain a deeper understanding of students' attitudes, perceptions, efforts, emotions, and behaviors in specific sociocultural and educational contexts, all of the dimensions of motivation and engagement which include behavioral, cognitive, affective, and subcomponents, must be taken into consideration.

Despite the motivation-engagement profiles, the current study also investigated and reported some challenges found during the process that might negatively impede their motivation and engagement in English Academic Writing. The study found that language use, paraphrasing, and coherence & cohesion became the three major problems or difficulties found among the participants. One possible explanation for this difficulty is that they lack sufficient awareness of academic terms, coherent devices, and the basic organization of academic writing. It was supported in the study conducted by Qadir et al. (2021) which proposed that students' failure or inability to comprehend complex text as source material, evaluate them, and paraphrase the relevant information well was attributed to the lack of basic proficiency in Academic Writing, necessary linguistic skills, and vocabulary mastery. This made the students unable to link phrases and clauses together to build logical meaning and enhance the clarity and readability of the text as a whole (Mustafa et al., 2022). In addition, these also led the students to reuse the same vocabulary and grammatical constructions, which negatively impacted their final writing product as they tended to use well-known terms rather than longer, complex, and unfamiliar ones (Mudawy & Mousa, 2017).

The next challenges were referencing & citing other people's work, choosing a significant topic, and expressing their voices through a piece of Academic Writing. These could happen as a result of their inadequate prior knowledge of the topic they were writing about. An additional factor could be insufficient self-assurance (Al-Badi, 2015). It's possible for students to believe they were not as knowledgeable as those writers who possessed both experience and intelligence. As a result, they could be reluctant to share their thoughts and express them in a piece of writing (AlMarwani, 2020). One possible solution to these problems would be to counsel students to never undervalue their abilities to effectively and boldly express their own points of view (Tsao, 2021). The last two challenges found from the participants were finding relevant sources and grammar & spelling. Khonamri et al. (2021) argued that it was understandable that the majority of texts written by second-language learners have varied degrees of grammatical and rhetorical mistakes. As a matter of fact, depending on one's level of proficiency, the likelihood of morpho-syntactic errors increases with text complexity. These types of mistakes were particularly prevalent in L2 authors who had a lot of ideas but possessed limited vocabulary to convey them in a clear and understandable manner (Listyani & Budjalemba, 2021). From the findings and discussion above, it is essential to address participants' challenges in Academic Writing and help them to overcome

the problems as these can negatively impact their motivation-engagement in Academic Writing.

Conclusion

This study investigated Thai EFL undergraduate students' motivation-engagement in academic writing. The present study found that adaptive cognition became the most dominant motivation-engagement profile followed by adaptive behavior, impending cognition, and maladaptive behavior possessed by students in XLC. It is revealed that the students in XLC showed a good motivation-engagement profile although they were still dealing with some problems in academic writing, such as language use, paraphrasing, coherence, and cohesion. Some actionable recommendations can be made to overcome these issues, including integrating corpus-based instruction in the EFL classroom to improve students' language use, practicing with source integration tasks to reduce plagiarism, and providing model texts and guiding students through deconstruction activities can raise their awareness of effective use of cohesive devices and logical idea progression or coherence.

The reason why the students had a reasonably good motivation-engagement profile despite the challenges is due to institutional values. XLC, as a Jesuit school, embraced a humanistic approach that holds the principle to help the students grow to be 'men and women for others. This value maintained students' positive attitude toward learning. Moreover, process-oriented teaching approaches that include online individualized corrective feedback also enhanced their motivation-engagement. The result of this research is beneficial for educators and writing teachers, especially in designing instructions to sustain students' motivation-engagement profiles. In addition, by addressing the challenges and problems that still exist among the students, educators, and future researchers can make informed decisions and suitable treatments to overcome those problems and increase students' overall performance in Academic Writing. However, there are some aspects that were not covered in this research. Individual differences, including gender, socio-economic and educational background, and English proficiency were not taken into account in this research.

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