

## WRITING MOTIVATION SCALE: A STUDY ON VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

Communicative skills come into prominence and are placed in the centre in any type of product published, digital or in another form in the new millenium – when technology is developing rapidly. Ability to communicate is the basic skill in many courses, and mainly in the native language course. Writing, one of the basic fields of skill in languages, is an important domain of linguistic skill in which individuals share their feelings, ideas, dreams and desires with the external world; and it is one of the three basic instruments of communication (namely, spoken, written and visual). This research aimed to develop a tool of measurement in order to determine secondary school students' motivation for writing. The scale was composed of 4 sub-scales: namely, self-efficacy, affective state, social acceptance, and physical state. The number of items in the Writing Motivation Scale was 28 in total. Therefore, the maximum score receivable from this scale – which was in 3-pointed Likert type- was 84 whereas the minimum score was 28.

**Keywords:** *Writing skill, writing motivation, writing motivation scale.*

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### Introduction

Communicative skills come into prominence and are placed in the centre in any type of product published, digital, or in another form in the new millennium – when technology is developing rapidly. Ability to communicate is the basic skill in many courses, and mainly in the native language course. Writing, one of the basic fields of skill in languages, is an important domain of linguistic skill in which individuals share their feelings, ideas, dreams and desires with the external world; and it is one of the three basic instruments of communication (namely, spoken, written and visual).

“It is extremely important for students to learn to write texts of different types in line with the requirements of life. The types can be the texts emerging in diverse fields of life to meet the needs (such as invitation cards, brochures, advertisement texts, business cards, announcements, etc) as well as literary genres (such as essays, stories, poems, letters, etc)” (Coskun and Tiryaki, 2013:102).

Writing, generally described as painting through words, is defined as narrating the feelings, thoughts and events in organisation and in unity in accordance with the rules of language. Such a narration means organising the related sentences and paragraphs through such mental skills as ordering, classifying, relating, criticising, guessing, making analyses and syntheses and evaluating, and thus forming a whole under one heading. Writing is also defined as the kinesthetic production of the symbols and signs necessary for the expression of knowledge, feelings, thoughts, desires and designs configured in the brain (Oz and Celik, 2007; Akyol, 2007; Agca, 1999; Demirel, 1999; Gocer, 2010; Kavcar, 1986; Ozbay, 2007). An individual’s understanding what he/she reads, listens to, sees or knows and thus configuring it in his or her mind for writing depends on developing the mental skills. In brief, writing is a skill composed of the process of expressing the feelings, thoughts and knowledge acquired in various ways through written channels of communication (Carter et al, 2002; Uygun, 2012).

Writing skill has such purposes as communicating the words and the thought, describing the life, determining the knowledge and the thought, and reflecting the thoughts and observations into the readers in a nice, accurate and effective way by employing the accumulation of observations and of knowledge. The job of projecting is not restricted to just informing; but it also involves versatile and complex activities to ensure that the reader gets pleasure. In fulfilling those activities several factors such as the skill of using one’s native language, individuality/style, making observations, reading and thinking should be taken into consideration (Aktas and Gunduz, 2008; Binyzar and Ozdemir, 1980). Writing is not only a skill related to the product created, but it also involves such issues as what stages are taken to produce the product, what problems are encountered at what stages, and what ways of solution are recommended to eliminate the problems. Therefore, writing is a field of study that needs to be performed by meditating, planning and taking pains. Writing - which takes places in a process - also instills in children the cognitive skills necessary for observing, researching, evaluating, correcting and sustaining their behaviours (Dorn and Soffos, 2001).

The writing process is composed of the stages of pre-writing-preparation, writing draft-forming the plan, organising-improving, and publishing (Ministry of Education, 2006). The stages contained a series of complex processes and activities such as (1) choosing a topic and restricting it, (2) thinking on how to address the topic, determining the topic sentence, (3) producing what to say about the topic, performing the observations and experiments related to the topic, and determining the message, (4) planning the writing.

In addition to being a vehicle of communicating individuals' feelings and thoughts, writing as an action is also a domain of skill reflecting individuals' emotional states. The act of writing becomes meaningful to learners when it is considered as an instrument of expressing learners' thoughts, feelings and personal experiences, and of communicating, and when used in this way (Hidi and Boscolo, 2006). Yet, some difficulties stemming from the nature of writing make it difficult for learners to take pleasure from writing activity and to establish it as a skill for lifelong use (Yaman, 2010). Research studies have exhibited that writing is a complex internal process and that it causes individuals to relax emotionally (Kloss and Lisman, 2002; Smyth, 1998; Sloan et al., 2009).

On examining the components of writing – which is an internal and complex process - we find that long term active memory, cognitive processes, and motivation come into prominence (Sharples, 1998); and those components make the writing process individual and cause the emergence of self-efficacy perception. Unless methods for raising the motivation are available to perform a writing activity, it is impossible for writing individuals to make considerable progress and development (Ackerman, 2006). Hidi and Boscolo (2006) list the factors influencing the motivation to write as such: (1) having a desire to write, (2) having sufficient knowledge of the topic, (3) an uncomplicated topic for writing, (4) giving instant feedback for the writing, and (5) being able make constant efforts during writing.

Motivation is a broad concept containing wishes, desires, needs, impulses and interests (Cuceloglu, 2004). It is a factor which has become an important element in learning the native language and a foreign language (Vaezi, 2008) for the last thirty years, which represents one of the most attractive and most complicated variables used in explaining the individual differences in language learning (MacIntyre et al., 2001), and which is necessary for successful language acquisition (Dornyei, 2001a). Through years, students' performances dramatically decreased despite the curricula's expectations of the students, and several studies were conducted in relation to the issue so as to raise learners' in-class study motivations (Ackerman, 2006).

Dornyei (2001b) points out that there are two important traditions of research in psychology investigating the causes of human behaviours, and that they are motivation psychology and social psychology. The author states that studies related to motivation are based on these two traditions of research, and then the author explains the leading theories of motivation in psychology under four headings:

1. Expectation- value theories,
2. (2) goal (target) theories,
3. (3) self-determination theories,
4. (4) social psychological theories

Walker and Simons (1997) consider the leading theories related to human motivation as a whole and summarise the general properties of the theories in five points:

People have the highest motivation

1. when they are adequate/ skillful
2. when they have sufficient level of autonomy,
3. when they set valuable goals,
4. when they receive feedback,
5. when they are approved/confirmed by others.

The actualisation of the writing activity depends on students' interest in the activity, their willingness and needs. On reviewing the relevant literature, it was found that motivation for reading, which was a skill directly related with writing, was addressed by researchers and that the scale for reading motivation was developed (Wigfield and Guthrie, 1995). Research has shown that students with high motivation to read devote time to reading and that they transform reading into a habit (Gambrell, 2011). Various scales on writing anxiety were developed so as to determine the anxieties about writing in the native language (Petzel and Wenzel, 1993) and an in foreign language (Cheng, 2004). Besides, a self-efficacy scale for writing was developed (Sengül, 2013) in relation to writing in the native language.

No measurement tools proved to be valid and reliable were encountered in Turkey to determine secondary school students' levels of motivation for writing in the native language. This study aims at developing a valid and reliable scale so as to determine secondary school students' levels of motivation to write in their native language.

## **Method**

### **Study Group**

This research was conducted with 493 students attending the primary education schools in Istanbul. Since the selection of the participants was made on the basis of willingness, the method of purposive sampling was employed. 55.2% (272) of the participants were male while 44.8% (221) of them were female. 24.9% (123) of the students were the fifth graders whereas 31.8% (157) were the sixth graders, 23.9% (118) were the seventh graders, and 19.3% (95) were the eighth graders.

### **Procedures**

Prior to the scale development work, literature was reviewed, and the scales used in similar studies were examined. In addition to that, students were asked to write a composition about writing activities in Turkish classes. Thus, a content analysis was performed for the students' compositions and the research studies found in literature. Special care was taken to include as many trial items as possible in order to uncover the writing motivation present in primary school students; and consequently, a pool of 60 items was formed. The items were then analysed by 5 experts (measurement and evaluation experts, experts on teaching Turkish, and Turkish teachers) who had been doing their post-doctorate research. Following the modifications based on expert opinions, a form of 53 items was prepared.

The trial form contained three sections. The first section included instructions on how to answer the questions in the scale. The second section, on the other hand, contained questions on personal information (such as gender, age, grade level, grades for Turkish course). The third section included alternative answers to be chosen to the questions on competence in general.

The statements were designed in the 3-pointed Likert type by taking the primary school students into consideration. The alternative answers to be chosen for each statement were "no", "sometimes", and "yes" respectively. The validity and reliability analyses were performed on the data obtained from the trial form.

The construct validity was analysed for the validity study of the writing motivation scale (WMS). In order to prove the construct validity, factor analysis was performed for the data so as to find whether the scale was one dimensional or multidimensional, and if it was multidimensional, to see on what dimensions the items clustered. Confirmatory factor analysis was done in order to evaluate the extent to which the factors composed of a number of variables fitted the real data. So as to find whether or not the items were valid,

item analysis was performed. The corrected item-total correlations were examined in relation to the evidence for the reliability of the scale, internal consistency coefficient, and item analysis. And for the analyses of the data obtained from the validity and reliability studies of the scale, the SPSS 20.0 and LISREL 8.54 programmes were used.

**Findings**

**Findings Concerning the Validity of the Scale**

The construct validity of the scale was tested through factor analysis. Firstly the data obtained from the trial application was checked to find whether or not they fitted the factor analysis. The results for the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test and the Barlett test demonstrating whether or not the data fitted the factor analysis are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1.** The Results for the KMO and the Barlett Tests

<b>The measure of fit for the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin sample</b>		0,928
<b>Bartlett test for sphericity</b>	X <sup>2</sup>	9394,666
	sd	1275
	p	0,000

As is clear from Table 1, the calculated value for KMO fit measure is 0.928. The value is above 0.70, which is regarded as the critical value. The Barlett test for sphericity calculated for the same data is 9394.666, and is significant at the level of 0.01 (p<0.01). These values show that the data obtained from the trial application can be put to the factor analysis.

In consequence of the exploratory factor analysis performed by using the principal components analysis and the varimax rotation, a four-factor structure accounting for 40.8 of the total variance was obtained. The total variance explained by each factor after the rotation were 26.90, 5.75, 4.38 and 3.76 respectively. Considering the starting eigenvalues, the fact that the eigenvalue of the first factor (13.718) was much higher than that of the second factor (2.933) can be interpreted as that the scale has a general factor as a whole. The factor loads of the scale and the rates of variances they account for are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2.** The Results for Exploratory Factor Analysis

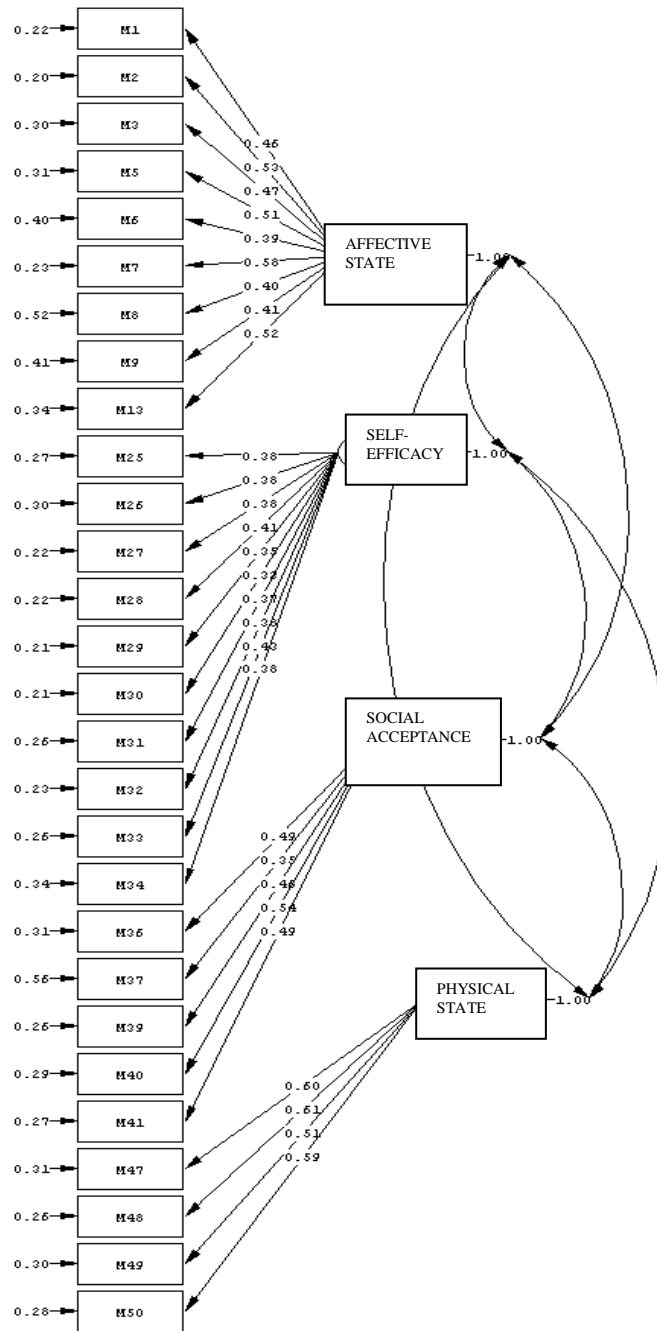
<b>Item no</b>	<b>Self-efficacy</b>	<b>Affective State</b>	<b>Social Acceptance</b>	<b>Physical State</b>
<b>28</b>	0,728			
<b>31</b>	0,662			
<b>26</b>	0,658			
<b>27</b>	0,632			
<b>32</b>	0,584			
<b>29</b>	0,569			
<b>33</b>	0,542			
<b>30</b>	0,501			
<b>25</b>	0,449			
<b>34</b>	0,375			
<b>5</b>		0,682		
<b>7</b>		0,643		
<b>2</b>		0,623		

3		0,617		
13		0,555		
8		0,509		
1		0,473		
6		0,452		
9		0,428		
40			0,655	
39			0,649	
37			0,609	
36			0,545	
41			0,520	
48				0,834
49				0,773
50				0,743
47				0,721
<b>Eigenvalues</b>	13,718	2,933	2,236	1,919
<b>Variances explained</b>	26,90	5,75	4,38	3,76

According to Table 2, items 25, 26,27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33 and 34 have the highest load value in the first factor; items 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 13 in the second factor; items 36, 37, 29, 40 and 41 in the third factor; and items 47, 48, 49 and 50 in the fourth factor. The loads of the items in the first factor are in the 0.728-0.375 range, the loads of the items in the second factor are in the 0.682-0.428 range, the loads of the items in the third factor are in the 0.655-0.520 range, and the loads of the items in the fourth factor are in the 0.834-0.721 range. Accordingly, it is a four-factor scale and all of the items have load values that can be included in the final form of the scale.

On examining the scope of the items in the factors determined, the first factor was labelled as “self-efficacy”, the second as “affective state”, the third one as “social acceptance”, and the fourth one as “physical state”.

Confirmatory factor analysis was performed in order to confirm the Writing Motivation Scale, whose dimensions had been determined through exploratory factor analysis. The fit indices obtained through the confirmatory factor analysis which was performed for construct validity were examined, and it was found that the chi-square ( $\chi^2=727,37$ ,  $sd=344$ ,  $p=0.00$ ) was significant. The values for fit indices were found as RMSEA= .048, CFI= .982, IFI= .98, GFI= .90, AGFI=.89, and SRMR= .048. The path diagram for the model is shown in Figure 1.



Chi-Square=727.37, df=344, P-value=0.00000, RMSEA=0.048

Figure1. Path Diagram for the Writing Motivation Scale

### Findings Concerning the Reliability of the Scale and Concerning the Analysis of the Items

The internal consistency coefficients for the whole of the Writing Motivation Scale and for the sub-scales are shown in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Factors and the Alpha Reliability Coefficients for the whole Scale

	Self-efficacy	Affective State	Social Acceptance	Physical State	Total
<b>Number of items</b>	10	9	5	4	28
<b>Cronbach <math>\alpha</math></b>	0,849	0,863	0,768	0,820	0,914

On examining Table 3, it was found that the Cronbach Alpha value was 0.914 for the whole scale. The reliability coefficient for the sub-scale of self-efficacy was found as 0.849, the one for the affective sub-scale was found as 0.863, the one for the sub-scale of social acceptance as 0.768, and the one for the sub-scale of physical as 0.820. Item analysis conducted demonstrated that item-total test correlations were in the 0.352 – 0.696 range. The correlations of each item with the total test score are shown in Table 4.

**Table 4.** The item-test Correlations of the WMS

Item no	Item-total correlations
M1	0,679*
M2	0,679*
M3	0,590*
M5	0,631*
M6	0,531*
M7	0,696*
M8	0,490*
M9	0,542*
M13	0,653*
M25	0,574*
M26	0,508*
M27	0,544*
M28	0,537*
M29	0,518*
M30	0,501*
M31	0,499*
M32	0,553*
M33	0,600*
M34	0,552*
M36	0,598*
M37	0,352*
M39	0,577*
M40	0,603*
M41	0,613*
M47	0,522*
M48	0,439*
M49	0,376*
M50	0,500*

\*p<0,01



An examination of Table 4 makes it clear that all of the values are statistically significant at the level of 0.01. In this case, it may be said that the property measured through each item is the same as the property measured through the whole scale, and thus that all of the items can be included in the final draft of the scale.

#### **An Evaluation of the Scale Scores**

The number of items in the Writing Motivation Scale was 28 in total. Therefore, the maximum score receivable from this scale – which was in 3-pointed Likert type- was 84 whereas the minimum score was 28. The four items having a negative meaning in the scale were encoded inversely.

#### **Discussion and Conclusions**

This research aimed to develop a tool of measurement in order to determine secondary school students' motivation for writing. The scale was composed of 4 sub-scales; namely, self-efficacy, affective state, social acceptance, and physical state.

It was found in consequence of literature review that the research studies performed in relation to writing motivation focussed on such issues as purpose in writing, the need felt for writing, the value attached to writing, interest in writing (Hidi and Boscolo, 2007), belief in self-efficacy, target tendencies, interests, and results obtained (Troia et al., 2012). Besides, by taking families and writing experiences in the school setting into consideration among the factors influencing learners' writing motivation, Nolen (2007) lay emphasis on social contexts.

The first dimension in this current research was “self-efficacy”. Bandura (1986: 361) defines the concept of self-efficacy as “individuals' judgement of themselves in relation to the capacity to organise and successfully perform the activities necessary for displaying a certain level of performance”. In writing skills, a directly proportional relation exists between high motivation and self-efficacy, moreover, high motivation also paves the way for the increase of the author's perception of self-efficacy (Bruning and Horn 2000; Pajares, 2003).

The second dimension mentioned in this study was “social acceptance”. Walker and Symons (1997) consider the leading theories on human motivation as a whole and summarise the general properties of the theories in five main points. According to one of those five points, when people are approved / accepted by others, their motivation reaches the maximum level.

Another dimension in this study was the “physical state”. In addition to their influence in visual-motor skills and in assuring the hand-eye coordination in the writing process, physical factors are also important in affecting the cognitive and the social development. Puberty was the period on which this research was focussed. In this period, the development of the muscles enabling writing is at a more advanced level than the one in the primary school period and it comes very close to that of mature people's. The number of studies addressing this dimension of writing is very small in Turkey. The research studies conducted by Temur (2011), Temur et al. (2012) - which deals with such physical factors as holding the pencil, the position of the paper, the posture in sitting, and applying pressure on the paper- are remarkable in this respect.

The final dimension dealt with in this research was the dimension of “affective state”. Students' emotional status in the writing process is also important in the development of the writing skill. “Individuals' affective side involves emotions, preferences, sensations, beliefs, expectations, attitudes, appreciation, values, morals, ethics, etc. Learning the affective properties is important for individuals. This can be considered from two perspectives: First, teaching purely affective properties, and second, the instrumental use

of the learnt affective properties in teaching or learning the cognitive and the psychomotor behaviours. For instance, if an individual has negative attitudes towards mathematics, it becomes difficult for one to teach that person mathematics” (Tekindal, 2009: 1).

In consequence, it may be said that the self-efficacy dimension as well as the affective state which contains interests and the concepts of value, and the social dimension have similarities to the dimensions addressed in other research studies. On the other hand, the dimension of physical state was not encountered in other research studies. This is an important dimension in that it is not included in other research studies.

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