

Research Paper

A Study of Status of Academic Writing Skills among Research Scholars

Monika Kumari^{1*}, Dr. Jitendra Singh Goyal²

ABSTRACT

Research, often defined as the systematic search for knowledge, plays a pivotal role in academic advancement, more specifically when writing a doctoral thesis. Academic writing skills are essential for research scholars to effectively communicate their findings and contribute original knowledge. This study investigates the status of academic writing skills among research scholars at Chaudhary Charan Singh University, Meerut, with a focus on gender and faculty-based differences. 100 research scholars were chosen using a stratified random sampling technique, and data were gathered using a self-constructed tool distributed via Google Forms. The results indicate that female research scholars exhibited higher academic writing skills than their male counterparts. Furthermore, no significant differences in writing skills were found between scholars from the humanities/social sciences and those from the science faculty, with the majority of scholars falling into the medium skill category. The findings underscore the necessity of academic writing in the research process, highlighting the value for enhanced training in various aspects of academic writing, including paraphrasing, formal writing techniques, critical thinking, and citation skills. This research contributes to the broader understanding of academic writing proficiency in Indian universities and emphasizes its critical role in the success of doctoral research. The study also aligns with the objectives of India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which seeks to foster research excellence and educational development.

Keywords: *Research, Academic Writing Skills, Status, Research Scholars*

India is increasingly recognized as a top destination for education, featuring prestigious universities and a strong emphasis on research, particularly with the execution of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. NEP 2020 introduced various aspects to promote research for proper growth & development in education as well as for all stakeholders. “Systematized efforts to gain new knowledge.” defined by Redman and Mory. Research involves systematic investigations to acquire knowledge and establish facts, heavily relying on academic writing. Writing is a major task for research scholars, and the research thesis is the most extensive writing project of their careers. Dissertation writing is one of the most challenging forms of academic writing, presenting numerous obstacles for postgraduate candidates (Imani and Habil 2012; Trafford and Leshem 2008). It follows strict

¹Research Scholar, Department of Education, Chaudhary Charan Singh University, Meerut, Uttar Pradesh

²Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Chaudhary Charan Singh University, Meerut, Uttar Pradesh

*Corresponding Author

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rules and traditional conventions (Wilkes, Godwin, and Gurney 2015) and must convey a clear, creative, and professional image while maintaining high academic standards (Trafford and Leshem 2008).

Academic writing demands an understanding of disciplinary rhetoric and the ability to produce grammatically accurate, coherent prose (Lourens, 2007). It adheres to consistent stylistic guidelines, such as the Harvard, MLA, APA, or Chicago citation styles, and follows a specific structural code (Johansen and Harding 2013). Academic writing is a must for legal professionals, postgraduate students, researchers and people associated with the academic profession and other fields. A comprehensive understanding of research methods and the proper way to analyze and interpret data is imperative for researchers to present their findings effectively. Therefore, people must have many important skills such as educational writing and research. So, individuals must possess several essential skills in academic writing and research, including: Paraphrasing Skills, Formal Writing Technique Skills, Critical Thinking and Analytical Skills, Summarisation Skills, Clarity and Coherence in Academic Writing, Ethics in Academic Writing, Technology and Academic Writing Skills, and Citation and Referencing Skills.

Academic Writing Skill

Academic writing differs from ordinary writing. Academic writing, as defined by Hartley (2008), is a mode of expressing themselves that researchers employ to delineate the specific areas of knowledge and the conceptual limits of their subjects. Academic writing is characterized by a formal tone, a precise word choice, and a clear focus on the thrust area being studied. "Academic writing is essential for sharing knowledge concisely and logically, adapting to different audiences, and improving communication in international academic contexts." Academic writing is a challenging procedure that requires a number of specialized skills. In addition to linguistic knowledge and a basic understanding of composition (Matoti & Shumba, 2011), as well awareness of the purpose of the writing and of the target audience, Trzeciak and Mackay (1994) stress that effective academic writing encompasses the following:

- The potential to quickly explore research literature to find relevant data;
- the ability to take notes and summarise;
- the ability to create content from multiple sources;
- knowledge of research ethics as well as avoiding plagiarism;
- proficiency with reference and citation standards; and
- the ability to arrange and format textual text, tables, figures, and other document components.

Researchers have identified several problems that could impact the capacity to generate high-quality academic writing due to its complexity (Beck, 2009). Effective research communication, journal publication, and article structure are all facilitated by proficient academic writing, especially in fields like orthopaedics. In order to effectively communicate ideas to a wide range of readers, academic writing requires a mastery of syntax, sentence structure, punctuation, and genre features. Additionally, academic writing fosters critical thinking, information analysis, and linguistic proficiency for research and clear communication. Therefore, individuals must possess several essential skills in academic writing and research, including:

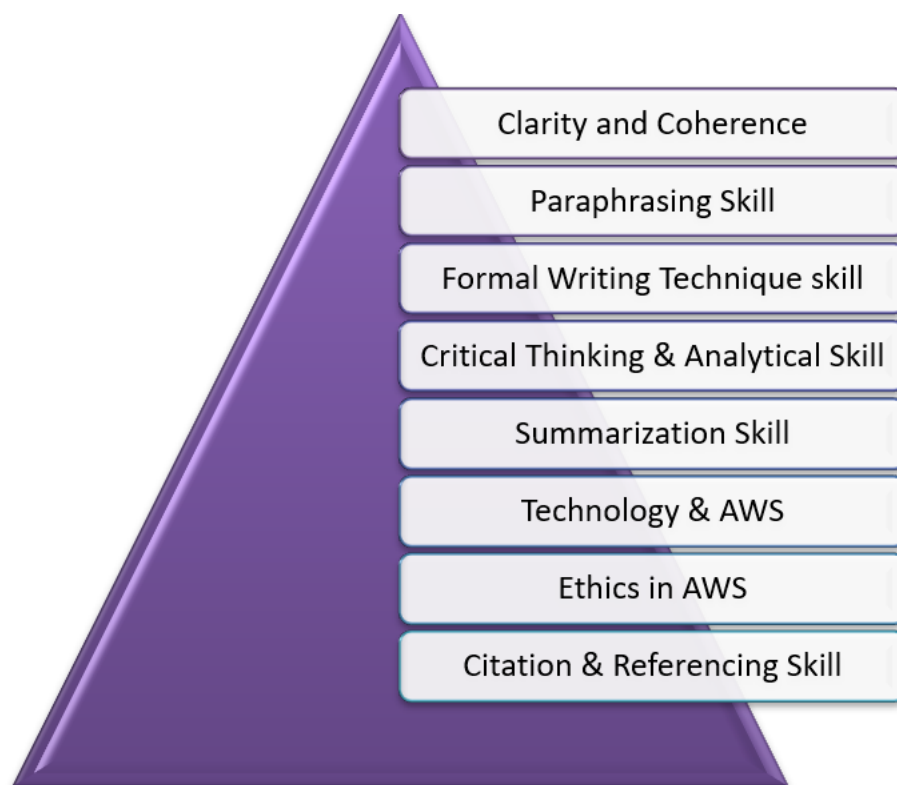


Fig.1. Academic Writing Skills

Academic Writing Skill and Research

Academic writing is a challenging procedure that demands various specialised abilities. The foundation of scholarly discourse is academic writing, which facilitates the sharing of ideas, knowledge, and research results among academics. According to Thais and Zawachi (2006), Paquot (2010), Taylor (2009), and Bailey (2003), academic writing is the art of writing for academic reasons, such as for publications or conferences that academics attend. In the twenty-first century, research writing abilities are crucial since they help students succeed both academically and professionally. Both in the classroom and at business, these abilities help students successfully convey their thoughts and conclusions. Additionally, they assist students in cultivating the critical thinking and problem-solving skills necessary for evaluating and interpreting study findings. Furthermore, research writing abilities help students become more innovative and creative, which enables them to come up with fresh concepts and methods in their field of study. Because research writing frequently requires students to collaborate with others and convey their findings to a larger audience, it also fosters communication and teamwork skills. To convey their findings to the academic community, researchers need to be highly skilled in data analysis and interpretation, have a thorough understanding of the research methodologies and instruments, and have outstanding writing and communication abilities. All things considered, students' capacity to thrive academically and in their future careers depends heavily on their research writing abilities.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

After looking at a number of research studies and their conclusions, it was discovered that no single study concentrating on academic writing skills had been carried out in India, and even studies conducted outside had not adequately described all of the academic writing skills. Table 1 below lists the numerous research that have been done on academic writing,

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including challenges with scholarly writing, the use of AI and technology in academic writing, academic writing skills courses, etc.

Table 1 Reviewing Existing Literature

Author(s)/year	Aim of the Study	Findings
Jarrah et al., (2023)	They examined the research that has been done on the usage of Chat GPT in academic writing and the consequences for plagiarism.	The findings of this study contribute to our knowledge of when and how to use ChatGPT for academic writing. The results indicate that ChatGPT is a useful writing tool, but ethical use requires responsible procedures, acknowledging work, avoiding plagiarism, and properly citing and attributing it.
Barua (2022)	The aim of the study is to understand students' awareness of needs of their English academic writing, their methods for addressing difficulties, and their opinion on the necessity of academic writing courses in their coursework.	Identified the challenges faced by research scholars in India, including their writing difficulties and lack of awareness regarding academic writing standards.
Ilham et al., (2022)	They examined the different kinds of learning requirements that students have for the creation of course materials in academic writing.	The findings indicate that most students prefer a model of instruction that includes grammar-related activities, visual aids, text composition goals, and a teacher as a controller. These were followed by feedback given during the writing process, the assessment of writing abilities, and the role of facilitator in helping students reach their full potential as teachers. Most students believe they should draft and revise written texts, and they also support small group classroom instruction.
Namira et al., (2021)	To investigate the potential correlation between academic writing proficiency and students' actual practice of plagiarism and their awareness of it.	The study found no significant correlation between plagiarism awareness and rate, inverse correlation between academic writing ability and rate, and simultaneous relationship between academic writing ability and plagiarism awareness. Furthermore, plagiarism awareness has less of an impact on plagiarism rates than academic writing proficiency.
Saglamel & Aydogdu (2021)	This research aims to bridge the gap by investigating the requirements of academic writing among students	Emphasized the need for more academic writing classes to help students grasp disciplinary registers for future English courses.

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	from the viewpoints of many stakeholders.	
Wale & Bogale (2021)	This study examines the effects of inquiry-based writing instruction on students' academic writing abilities.	Demonstrated that students' writing skills improved through inquiry-based instruction.
Celik (2020)	The design of this study was action research that was used to find out how a process-based approach affected perceptions of Ph.D. students of Turkish university about academic writing.	The findings show that the participants felt positive impact in their academic writing skills as a result by the experience.
Bakhsh et al., (2018)	To find out how important university students thought academic writing skills courses were.	Respondents deemed academic writing skills course crucial for quality essays, with five chosen writing talents contributing 65% of variance. It was suggested that the institution enhance the way of the course is delivered by making sure that sufficient human and material resources are available to achieve the desired outcomes.
Fatimah (2018)	The study examines the academic writing demands and challenges faced by students in the English Education Department at Ahmad Dahlan University, focusing on instructional resources, learning activities, skills, and materials.	The study highlights the importance of using Department resources, engaging in in-class writing exercises, and receiving peer and professor feedback to enhance students' understanding of academic writing. Another finding is that using textbooks, online references, and journals should be prioritized. The final issue is that the students struggle with vocabulary, grammar, idea development, and language expression.
Wischgoll (2017)	The study aimed to examine the impact of strategy training on academic writing skills, the differences in benefit from revision feedback, and the effectiveness of text structure training for UG & PG students.	Applying text structure knowledge improved academic writing skills, while feedback types benefited different student levels: postgraduates responded well to try-again feedback and undergraduates to informative tutoring.

Rationale of the Study

“The principal goal of education is to create men and women who are capable of doing new things, not simply repeating what other generations have done.” – Jean Piaget

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Research fosters scientific thinking and logical organisation, helping to solve problems and enhance existing ideas through new perspectives. In education, researchers face significant challenges, with a key focus on developing strong academic writing skills. Kamler and Thomson (2006:12) postulate that academic writing “is itself a form of research”. Academic writing is governed by rules and practices that adhere to traditional conventions (Wilkes, Godwin and Gurney 2015:166), and should ultimately present a clear, creative and professional image of a particular matter (Your Dictionary 2015:5), without jeopardising academic standards (Trafford and Leshem 2008:118). There must be some detail steps and important aspects which need to be put on the top of priority (Irawati, 2015). Higher education, scientific growth, and knowledge expansion all depend heavily on academic writing and research. In order to advance the academic community and society at large, academic writers and researchers are essential in creating, discussing, and spreading novel theories, thoughts, and ideas. It is particularly challenging for doctoral students, who often struggle with high standards, grammar, and vocabulary (Imani and Habil, 2012). Literature highlights that academic writing is difficult (Kamler and Thomson, 2006), complex (Morton et al., 2015), time-consuming (Kearns, 2017), and can be both demanding and frustrating (Gimenez in Johansen and Harding, 2013), and elaborated and explicit (Hyland in Biber and Gray 2010) with grammaticality and syntactical complexities. The present study is the first of its kind, in the area, as the concept is very novel in the field of teaching – learning, which examines the state of researchers' academic writing abilities at the university level. After reviewing relevant literature, the researcher of the present study discovered that the majority of researches on academic writing skills are mostly conducted in abroad only. In India, very less research work had been done especially to know the status quo of academic writing skills at higher educational level. Most of the studies related to academic writing have been conducted in technological developed countries. Academic writing skills' practices and strategies are still in its infancy in developing countries which experience different challenges from developed countries. So, the researcher felt that there is a need of conducting research to know the status quo of academic writing skills.

Statement of the Problem

“A study of status of Academic Writing Skill among Research Scholars.”

Objectives

1. To compare the status of male and female research scholars towards academic writing skills.
2. To compare the status of academic writing skills among research scholars of humanities or social science faculty and science faculty.
3. To study the status of academic writing skills of research scholars.

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in mean scores of male and female research scholars towards the status of academic writing skills.
2. There is no significant difference in mean scores of research scholars of humanities or social science faculty and science faculty towards the status of academic writing skills.

Delimitations

Researcher has been selected 100 Research scholars of Chaudhary Charan Singh University of Meerut City, as the sample for this study is based on the need for a focused and manageable group that accurately reflects the academic environment of the institution. This

delimitation guarantees that the study focuses on the experiences and viewpoints of research scholars in a particular university, enabling a more thorough examination of the state of academic writing among CCS University research academics.

RESEARCH METHOD

The researcher decided to employ the descriptive survey approach, according to the nature of the study, which is ideal for obtaining comprehensive, descriptive data regarding the actual circumstances and practices within a certain group. The descriptive survey approach enables the collection of firsthand, factual information using structured surveys or questionnaires, as the study's goal is to comprehend the degree of academic writing skills and how they are being improved or utilised by research academics.

Population

The study's research population is comprised up of academics who are presently enrolled in Chaudhary Charan Singh University's (CCS University) PhD programs in a variety of fields. This includes scholars studying both at the university's main campus as well as those enrolled in affiliated colleges across the region. A wide range of people from various academic faculties constitute the population, which serves as a representative sample of the university's and its affiliated institutes' research community.

Sample And Sampling Method

A sample of 100 research researchers from Chaudhary Charan Singh University (CCS University), Meerut, was chosen for this study using the stratified random sampling technique. First, the sample was divided into two strata: gender and faculty. To guarantee an equitable distribution, each stratum was further subdivided, with 50 male and 50 female academics chosen from various academic faculties.

Tool

Choosing or developing a suitable tool for study is essential to achieving the objectives of the research. Therefore, based on the study's objectives the researcher developed a questionnaire for this study. The questionnaire, which focused on obtaining data about research scholars' academic writing abilities, was thoughtfully created to match the goals of the study.

Statistical Techniques

To analyse and interpret the data, the researcher employed the following metrics: Mean (M), Standard Deviation (SD), Critical Ratio (CR), and Percentage (%). While the standard deviation quantified the diversity of the data, the mean offered average values. Data was represented in relative terms for easier comparison and interpretation, and the significance of discrepancies was tested using the Critical Ratio. These statistical techniques enabled the researcher to draw valid conclusions and test the hypotheses effectively.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

Hypothesis 1 – There is no significant difference in mean scores of male and female research scholars towards status of academic writing skills has been verified with the help of critical ratio, the result obtained from the analysis is shown in the table 1.1-

Table 1.1 Mean, SD and CR-Value Regarding Academic Writing Skills' Status of Male and Female Research Scholars

Sr. No.	Name of Group	N	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	df	Critical Ratio (CR)	Level of Significance at 0.05 level
1.	Male	50	35.36	10.89	98	3.672	Significant
2.	Female	50	42.84	9.43			

* CR Value at 0.05 level and df 98 is 1.98.

Interpretation: Table 1.1 shows the mean, standard deviation, and CR value of male and female research scholars towards the status of academic writing skills. Female research scholars have high mean score (M=42.84) in comparison to male research scholars (M=35.36). The tabulated t-value at 0.05 level of significance and df = 98 is 1.98. Hence, the calculated t-value = 3.672 is found to be statistically significant at 0.05 level of significance and df = 98. Therefore, the null hypothesis i.e., “There is no significant difference in mean scores of male and female research scholars towards status of academic writing skills” is rejected.

Discussion: The above result indicates that the status among female research scholars towards academic writing skills is higher than that of male research scholars. The main reasons for this could be educational background that emphasize writing and could enhance the academic writing abilities, mentorship and support that focus on developing writing skill, institutional resources that influencing their overall proficiency, and networking opportunity may engage female research scholars more actively in academic writing workshops and groups. Studies also suggest that women often exhibit greater attention to detail and thoroughness, traits beneficial for high quality academic writing.

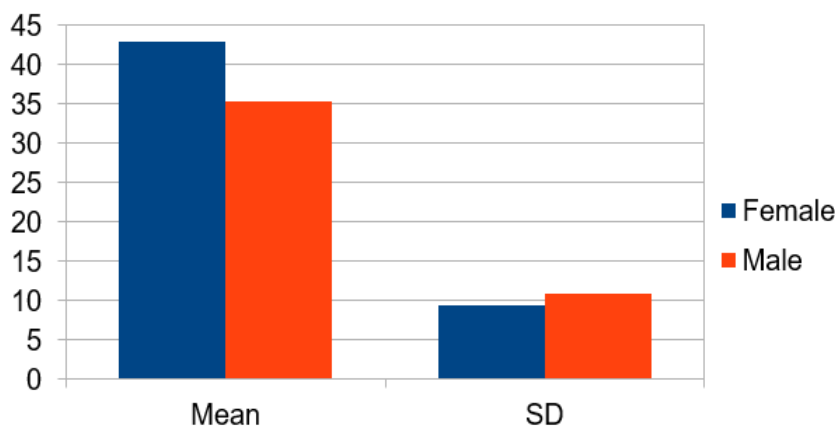


Figure 1.1 Mean, SD and CR-Value Regarding Academic Writing Skills' Status of Male and Female Research Scholars

Hypothesis 2 –There is no significant difference in mean scores of research scholars of humanities or social science faculty and science faculty towards the status of academic writing skills has been verified with the help of critical ratio, the result obtained from the analysis is shown in table 1.2-

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Table 1.2 Mean, SD and CR-Value Regarding Academic Writing Skills' Status of Research Scholars of Humanities or Social Science Faculty and Science Faculty

Sr. No.	Name of Group	N	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	df	Critical Ratio (CR)	Level of Significance at 0.05 level
1.	Faculty of Humanities or Social Sci.	50	39.64	11.66	98	0.498	Not Significant
2.	Faculty of Science	50	38.56	9.97			

*CR Value at 0.05 level and df 98 is 1.98.

Interpretation: From the above table 1.2, it is clear that the mean score obtained on academic writing skill status questionnaire of research scholars of humanities or social science faculty and science faculty is 39.64 and 38.56 respectively, standard deviation is 11.66 and 9.97 respectively and CR value is 0.498. The tabulated t-value at 0.05 level of significance and $df = 98$ is 1.98. Hence, the calculated t-value = 0.498 is found not to be statistically significant at 0.05 level of significance and $df = 98$. Therefore, the null hypothesis i.e., "There is no significant difference in mean scores of research scholars of humanities or social science faculty and science faculty towards the status of academic writing skills" is accepted.

Discussion: The above result indicates that there is no difference in the status of academic writing skills among research scholars of humanities or social science faculty and science faculty. The research scholars from humanities or social science faculty and science faculty share similar status regarding their academic writing skills, these common factors could be both disciplines provide rigorous training in writing; though the nature of writing may differ, institutional support for skill development in both fields, collaborative work and peer review processes, and scholars' dedication to improving their skills.

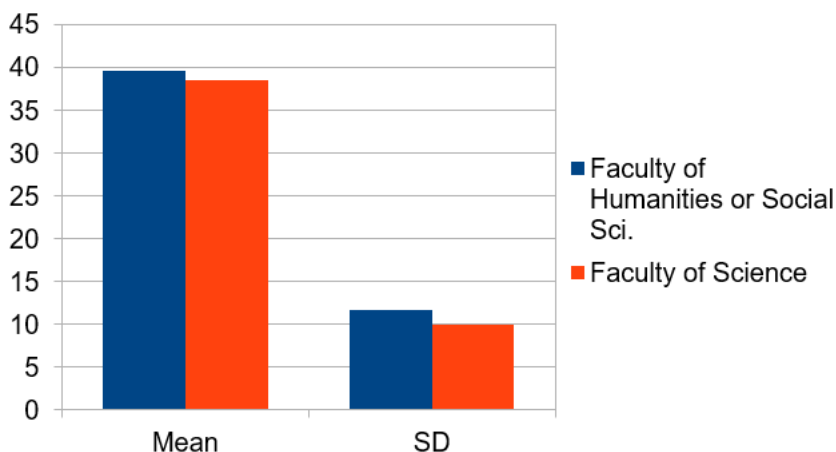


Figure 1.2 Mean, SD and CR-Value Regarding Academic Writing Skills' Status of Research Scholars of Humanities or Social Science Faculty and Science Faculty

Objective 3 - To study the status of academic writing skills of research scholars.

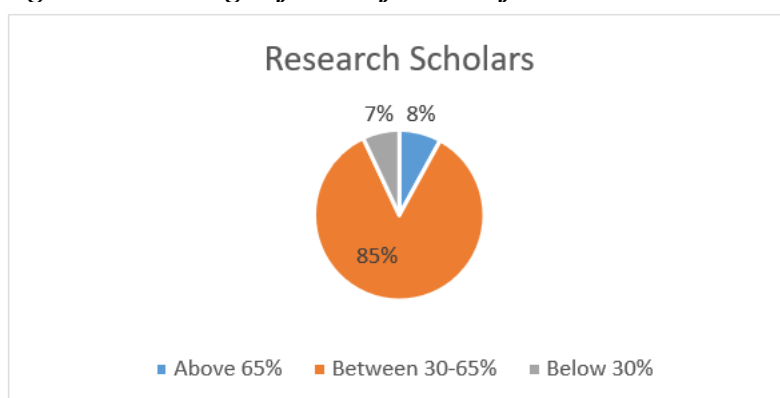
Table 1.3 Percentage of level of status of Research Scholars on Academic Writing Skills

Sr. No.	Score Range	% of Research Scholars
1.	Above 65%	8%
2.	Between 30-65%	85%
3.	Above 30%	7%

Interpretation: Above table 1.3 shows the status of academic writing skills among both male and female research scholars of selected faculties, that 7% research scholars were found with low level of status, 85% research scholars were found with medium level of status and 8% research scholars were found with high level of status towards academic writing skills.

Discussion: While studying the level of status of research scholars on academic writing skills, it was found that most of the research scholars fell into the medium level of status on academic writing skills and even in medium level of awareness, they were more inclined towards the lower limit of medium level awareness. The most probable reasons for their medium level of knowledge may be not incorporation of these academic writing skills in their curriculum, little or no motivation and opportunity to explore these skills and lack of facilities.

Fig. 1.3 Percentage of level of status of Research Scholars on Academic Writing Skills



CONCLUSION

The study reveals that the status among female research scholars towards academic writing skills is higher than that of male research scholars. The main reasons for this could be educational background that emphasize writing and could enhance the academic writing abilities, mentorship and support. Also, other result indicates that the research scholars from humanities or social science faculty and science faculty share similar status regarding their academic writing skills. While the findings for status of all research scholars shows that most of the research scholars fell into the medium level of status on academic writing skills and even in medium level of awareness, they were more inclined towards the lower limit of medium level awareness. Therefore, in order to improve the academic writing of doctorate candidates, institutions should be cautious and attentive.

Educational Implications

The findings of the present study have many clear and significant implications for research scholars, teachers, researchers, academic community, and educational administrators. The researcher in the study has describe the academic writing skills and digital educational

initiatives for betterment in research field in higher education that may prove helpful to the readers to understand and grasp these academic writing skills and digital educational initiatives in a systematic and comprehensive manner. Schools and universities can develop specialized workshops and training programs to address identified gaps in academic writing skills, tailored to different levels of proficiency. The conclusions of the study can assist educators in creating more useful teaching methods and materials to aid students in developing their academic writing skills.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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