Metacognitive Writing Strategies: Navigating the Writing Process of Secondary School Students

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Abstract. This study explored the metacognitive strategies employed by secondary school students and how it impacted their writing process. Utilizing qualitative methods, the research investigated the metacognitive writing strategies used by the students to elevate the quality of their writing composition. The study involved ten secondary school students from Optaciano Hilay National High School in Tugbok, Davao City. The participants were chosen based on the following criteria: must be enrolled grade 10 students, be academic achievers, have employed writing strategies, and be willing to participate in the study. The findings revealed three emerging experience themes: time management, lack of resources and support, and grammar and syntax issues. Meanwhile, the emerging themes for coping mechanisms include goal setting, self-reflection, and checking grammar and mechanics. The language education and teaching values drawn from the study discuss the importance of effectively using feedback, understanding your personal writing style, and how it increases the students' self-awareness. Metacognitive writing strategies enable students to understand their mental processes better, allowing them to reflect on and refine their writing. Moreover, the employed strategy in writing was crucial as it transformed the process from a chaotic endeavor into a structured, purposeful activity. Metacognitive writing strategies allowed writers to plan their approach, set clear objectives, and manage their time effectively, ensuring that each stage of the writing process, from brainstorming to final revisions, was thoughtfully executed.

1. Introduction

Writing is a dynamic voyage into the depths of one's own mind. It begins with a blank page, a daunting yet thrilling invitation to explore unexplored terrains of thought and imagination. With each sentence, the students explore ideas, discovering new perspectives and insights about the world and themselves. Writing assignments become more than tasks; they transform into adventures that foster growth and understand-ing. Through the process, they learn the craft of writing and develop critical thinking, empathy, and self-expression. In this way, writing in the classroom becomes a powerful tool for personal and intellectual exploration, revealing the limitless potential that lies within each student. To navigate through the writing process, it requires strategies. Metacognitive writing strategy refers to the process by which writers plan, mon-

itor, and evaluate their writing activities to enhance their writing performance and cognitive awareness. This involves setting specific writing goals, actively monitoring one's progress during the writing process, and evaluating the effectiveness of the strategies used to achieve the desired outcomes. By fostering a deeper understanding of their own cognitive processes, writers can develop more effective writing habits, improve organization and coherence, and ultimately produce higher quality written work (Kumar, 2021). Globally, Zhang Qin (2018) examined how metacognitive strategies, such as planning, monitoring, and evaluating one's writing process, can significantly improve students' writing performance. The research highlighted that students who actively engaged in these strategies were better able to organize their thoughts, manage their time effectively, and produce coherent and well-structured essays. By fostering an awareness of their own cognitive processes, these students could adapt their writing strategies to different tasks and challenges, leading to more effective and purposeful writing. However, several global studies have identified pervasive challenges its implementation. Smith Mancy (2018) highlighted significant disparities in the accessibility and quality of metacognitive strategy instruction across different educational systems. In many developing regions, a lack of resources, insufficient teacher training, and overcrowded classrooms hinder the effective teaching of these strategies. Consequently, students in these areas often miss out on the cognitive and academic benefits that metacognitive writing strategies can provide, exacerbating existing educational inequalities. Another pressing issue is the cultural variability in the acceptance and integration of metacognitive strategies. Researchers have found that in some educational systems, particularly those with a strong emphasis on rote learning and standardized testing, there is resistance to incorporating metacognitive approaches. These systems often prioritize memorization and factual recall over critical thinking and self-reflection, making it difficult for students to develop and apply metacognitive strategies effectively. This cultural resistance can limit students' ability to engage in deeper, more meaningful learning experiences and hinder their overall academic growth (Do Phan, 2019). In the Philippines, the implementation of metacognitive writing strategies faces several unique challenges, as outlined in a Santos et al. (2022). One of the primary issues is the limited access to professional development for teachers. Many educators in the Philippines do not receive adequate training in metacognitive strategies, which hinders their ability to effectively teach these techniques to their students. The lack of ongoing professional development opportunities means that teachers struggle to stay updated with the latest educational practices, resulting in a gap between current teaching methods and the potential benefits of metacognitive instruction. Discipulo and Bautista (2022) highlighted the impact of overcrowded classrooms on the application of metacognitive writing strategies. In many public schools across the Philippines, student-to-teacher ratios are exceedingly high, making it difficult for teachers to provide individualized attention and feedback. This environment is not conducive to the development of metacognitive skills, which require personalized instruction and ongoing guidance. Consequently, students are often unable to engage deeply with the writing process or develop the self-reflective habits necessary for metacognitive growth, leading to suboptimal writing outcomes and reduced overall academic performance. Moreover, Lim and Perez (2021) emphasized the cultural and systemic barriers that impede the integration of metacognitive strategies into the Philippine education system. The traditional emphasis on rote memorization and high stakes testing often leaves little room for innovative teaching practices that promote metacognition. Addi-

tionally, there is a general lack of awareness and understanding of metacognitive strategies among both educators and policymakers. Lim and Perez advocate for a shift in educational priorities to include metacognitive skill development as a core component of the curriculum. This shift would involve curriculum reforms, increased investment in teacher training, and a cultural change towards valuing critical thinking and self-regulation as essential educational outcomes. In the local setting, a notable study was conducted in Davao City, Philippines, by Dulas (2018). He delved into the metacognitive strategies employed by students in their writing processes. The research shed light on the unique challenges faced by students in the region and explored the effectiveness of various metacognitive approaches in enhancing their writing skills. By examining the cognitive processes involved in writing and the specific strategies utilized by students, the author provided valuable insights into how educators in Davao City can tailor their instruction to better support students' metacognitive development. The findings contribute to the ongoing efforts to improve writing instruction in the region and address the diverse needs of students in Davao City's educational landscape. Despite substantial research on the benefits and challenges of metacognitive writing strategies, significant gaps remain that need to be addressed. One prominent gap, as highlighted by Perez et al. (2019) in their review, is the limited understanding of how these strategies specifically impact students. While existing studies often focus on general student populations, there is a lack of targeted research examining how metacognitive strategies can be tailored to support students with language barriers or varying socio-economic statuses. Addressing this gap would provide a more comprehensive understanding of metacognitive writing strategies and enhance their implementation across diverse educational contexts. Specifically, the findings of this study illuminated the experiences and coping strategies of students from Optaciano Hilay National High School in employing metacognitive writing strategies for their writing performance. Thus, putting into consideration the cited problem situation, I found it timely to conduct this study. This brought the necessity to conduct an inquiry about the metacognitive writing strategies of secondary school students and their effect on their writing performance, as well as values that are deemed necessary and useful. I hope that this study will be beneficial to identified sectors of the academe. This includes the educational leaders, school heads, teachers, other stakeholders, and future researchers. Educational leaders can benefit from the findings of this study because it can provide them with insights regarding the metacognitive writing strategies utilized by secondary school students and their effect on their writing performance. Also, they can benchmark the results and find ways to better enhance and support the students to be efficient and effective writers. The findings of this study might help the school heads or principals to be aware and informed about the metacognitive writing strategies utilized by secondary school students and their effect on their writing performance. The teachers can benefit from this study by looking into the findings and learning from the metacognitive strategies employed by students and how it can assist them in the writing process. They stakeholders may provide better support to better enhance the experiences of students in utilizing strategies in their writing. Finally, This would be helpful to future researchers as an additional contribution to their references for future research in the field of metacognitive writing strategies and in navigating the writing process.

1.1.   Purpose of the Study—This phenomenological study investigated and analysed the experiences and coping mechanisms utilized by students at Optaciano Hilay National High School as they endeavour to enhance and refine their writing skills. The research provided useful insights into the cognitive processes and self-regulation techniques used by students during their writing activities by carefully analyzing these strategies. In the end, the study increased our understanding of how to effectively use metacognitive tactics to encourage students' development of proficient writing skills. The central objective of this data collection revolved around capturing the real-life experiences of secondary school students as they apply metacognitive writing strategies to enhance their writing abilities. The outcomes of this phenomenological study provided us with a deeper understanding of the precise metacognitive techniques that students employ when tackling writing assignments, thereby illuminating the diverse cognitive processes inherent in the writing endeavor. Furthermore, I assessed the efficacy of these strategies in elevating the quality of students' written work. The valuable insights obtained from this study possess the potential to exert a positive influence on various aspects of language education and teaching, professional development initiatives, and educational policies aimed at cultivating empowering and supportive learning environments within classrooms.

1.2.   Research Questions—This study explored the metacognitive strategies utilized by secondary school students to improve their writing abilities. The research was executed with the purpose of addressing the following inquiries:

(1) What are the experiences encountered by students in their metacognitive writing strategies?

(2) What are the coping mechanisms used by students to improve their writing performance?

(3) What values can be formulated from the findings of the study?

1.3.   Definition of Terms—For a more comprehensive understanding, the following terms were described operationally. Metacognitive Writing Strategies. It is defined as one of the beneficial writing strategies among English as a second language (ESL) writer. It helps learners to reach a higher level of writing content, reach desirable goals, and have better control over their behaviour and their learning, allowing the learners to be more confident and efficient in their writing (Dulas, 2018). Writing Performance. This refers to the achievement of writing in which students use vocabulary and structures to clarify and organize their thoughts coherently and fluently (IGI Global, 2021).

1.4.   Significant of the Study—This study will be beneficial to identified sectors of the academe. This includes the educational leaders, school heads, teachers, other stakeholders, and future researchers. Educational leaders can benefit from the findings of this study because it can provide them with insights regarding the metacognitive writing strategies utilized by secondary school students and their effect on their writing performance. Also, they can benchmark the results and find ways to better enhance and support the students to be efficient and effective writers. The findings of this study might help the school heads or principals to be aware and informed about the metacognitive writing strategies utilized by secondary school students and their effect on their writing performance.

1.5.   Theoretical Lens—

The theoretical underpinning of the study was anchored on Flavell's Theory of Metacognition (1979). The theory conceptualized the process of knowing and regulating the students' own knowledge in order to maximize their own learning. Metacognitive strategies are mental executive skills that serve to control cognitive activities and to ensure a cognitive goal is achieved. Correspondingly, it involves thinking about the writing process, its planning, monitoring, and self-evaluating of what has been written. More explicitly, via the skills of planning, monitoring, and evaluating the writer manages, directs, regulates, and guides his/her writing production. Additionally, Brown (1978) further elaborated the theory by introducing the notions of "Knowledge of Cognition" and "Regulation of Cognition". Included in the regulatory processes are: planning, monitoring, and evaluating. These three components break down the important parts one has to go through in writing. In relation to the current study, the metacognitive theory is fit to serve as a theoretical anchorage. Through the theory, the research is able to unravel what is metacognitive strategy, what strategies belong to this category, and most importantly, how students utilize these strategies in their own compositions. The study is further reinforced by Academic Performance by Elger (2007). He coined the term 'perform' which refers to the ability to produce a valued result and 'performer' which pertains to the individual or group. According to this theory, the higher academic performance of students will lead to an increase in their capability, capacity, skills, motivations, and knowledge. Meaning, as student perform best in their academics, at the same time, they learn and grow. As applied to the present study, the student's academic performance will be focused specifically on their writing performance and how it improved as they employed the metacognitive strategies. The theory will reinforce the effects of the strategies employed toward the students' writing performance, as well as their capacity, capability, skills, and knowledge.

2. Methodology

This chapter effectively addresses the specific objectives of the study by outlining the systematic procedures and methodologies used in phenomenological research. It also explains the selected research design and the roles I played as the researcher throughout the study's implementation. Moreover, it offers thorough insights into the research subjects, clarifying their procedures and selection standards. The chapter concludes by exploring the techniques used for data collection, analysis, and coping mechanisms used to uphold ethical standards during the research.

2.1. Philosophical Assumptions—A study's philosophical and qualitative presumptions were vital in steering the investigation. Four fundamental assumptions form the bedrock for comprehending qualitative research: ontological, epistemological, axiological, and methodological. These assumptions establish the groundwork for the research design and inform the researcher's approach to the study. A paradigm is a broad framework or perspective that guides and shapes how researchers approach their studies, formulate research questions, gather data, analysed findings, and interpret results. It encompasses a set of beliefs, assumptions, methodologies, and theoretical foundations that influence how researchers conceptualize and conduct their research (Zukauskas et al., 2018). In this research, the paradigm guided the choice of methodology, methods, and techniques, shaping the overall research process and ensuring coherence in the study. Ontology. This section of the study focuses

Experiences about metacognitive writing strategies

Values drawn from the findings of the study

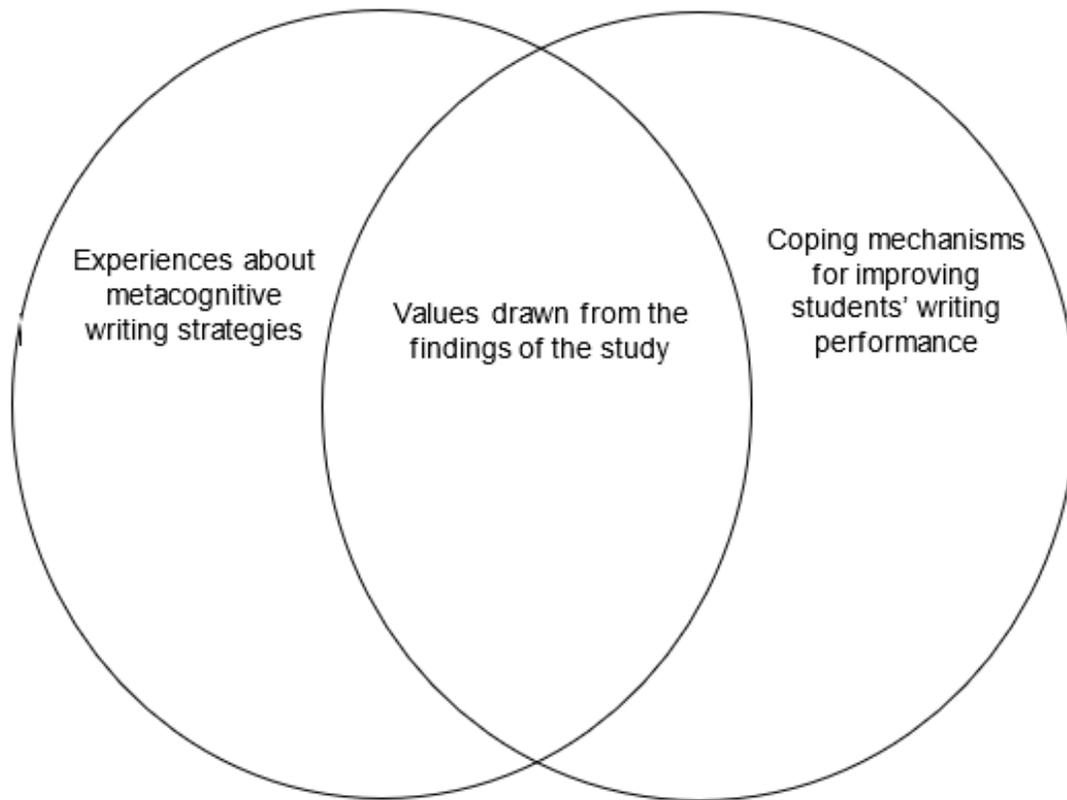Coping mechanisms for improving students' writing performance

Fig. 1. The Conceptual Framework of the Study

on the relationship between the problem and reality. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), ontology could be defined as the study of the nature of reality. The authors also assert that the research participants' perceptions of reality are varied and subjective. This study recognizes the complexity and diversity of the realities faced by secondary school students and their metacognitive writing strategies. Every student's story adds to a diverse yet collective understanding of their experiences. It was my sole responsibility to use theme analysis to capture these various realities and provide a thorough picture of the experiences, coping mechanism, and values that students have in their writing performance. Epistemology. Epistemology deals with the nature of knowledge and the relationship between the knower and the known. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), the researcher made an effort to reduce the gap between them and the participants based on the epistemological premise. By engaging directly with the participants, I became an "insider," facilitating a more authentic and nuanced collection of data. This approach supports the gathering of firsthand experiences and coping mechanisms, which are critical in exploring the subjective realities of the participants. Axiology. It concerns the influence and importance of my values as a researcher in this study. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), acknowledging and openly discussing the researcher's values that shape the study is crucial. The values which influence how data are interpreted and presented are explicitly acknowledged in the research process. As a researcher, I handled each participant's

narrative with care and integrity, and I have the utmost respect for the information they provide. This commitment guarantees that the experiences of the students are communicated truthfully, mirroring both their individual and research values. Methodology. According to Crotty (2020), this was "the strategy, plan of action, process, or design lying behind the choice and use of particular methods and linking the choice and use of the methods to the desired outcomes." Its objectives are to explain, assess, and defend procedures. This study explores the experiences of secondary school students in relation to the employment of metacognitive writing strategies using a qualitative methodology. In order to support the ontological and epistemological tenets, certain techniques like focus groups and interviews are employed, enabling a thorough and sympathetic examination of participants' stories. These techniques were chosen because they can successfully convey the complexity and depth of the participants' experiences. Rhetoric. In research, rhetoric is the skillful and convincing use of language, communication strategies, and presentation tactics to effectively communicate concepts, claims, and conclusions in order to sway the audience's opinion and comprehension of the study (Beqiri, 2018). I utilized an engaging and respectful narrative style that honors the voices of the participants while effectively communicating the significance of the findings. This method not only makes the research easier to read but also guarantees that the interpretations are strong and based on the experiences of the participants.

2.2. Qualitative Assumptions—Using a phenomenological research methodology, my goal was to explore the writing performance of secondary school students from Davao City. My objective was to gather information about their experiences, coping mechanisms, and values in

relation to the phenomenon I am studying. Utilizing phenomenology as my guiding qualitative framework, I sought to uncover the essence and significance of the roles played by these individuals, emphasizing their unique viewpoints and the intricate details of their experiences. As

the study's qualitative researcher, I supported a level of investigation that goes beyond cursory observations. My research aims to investigate the experiences, challenges, and coping mechanisms of participants in relation to the phenomenon. I emphasize the significance of understanding the complexities of the human experience in light of the various perspectives that are shaped by unique contexts, backgrounds, and personal histories (Neubauer et al., 2019).

To capture the profound and complex nature of metacognitive writing coping mechanisms, my study places a strong emphasis on in-depth interviews, reflective dialogues, and the analysis of participants' narratives. I hope to contribute a thorough and contextually rich understanding of the experiences, challenges, coping mechanisms, and values related to metacognitive writing strategies all while upholding phenomenological principles.

2.3. Design and Procedure—Determining the precise approach used in a study was crucial in order to customize the best research design, data collection strategy, and data analysis approach to the study's objectives. I used a qualitative research design in this investigation. Hammersley (2013, cited in Aspers and Corte, 2019) states that studies characterized by verbal rather than statistical analysis are appropriate for qualitative research. Since I studied the lived experiences, coping mechanisms, and values of secondary school students regarding metacognitive writing strategies, the qualitative design was the most appropriate. This means that rather than establishing or refuting theories, I described and elaborated on this phenomenon. There are, however, specialized methods used in qualitative research, including grounded theory, narrative, case studies, phenomenology, and ethnography. Using a qualitative phenomenological research design, I explored the lived experiences of the

participants in this particular setting. I selected this approach because, according to Asper's (2009, cited in Aspers and Corte, 2019) work, the scientific side of phenomenological research focuses on communicating the viewpoints of the subjects and the importance of their experiences, then applying scientific concepts to analysed these perspectives. Furthermore, according to Creswell (2018), a phenomenological study was a method of inquiry that describes the complex and collective experiences of the participants with respect to a particular phenomenon. A key idea in phenomenology was to reduce one's interpretations of a particular phenomenon to a description that can be applied to all situations. Therefore, my goal was to identify a phenomenon that revolves around the participants' experience about metacognitive writing strategies. I collected information from people with direct experience with this phenomenon to create detailed and accurate descriptions.

2.4. Research Participants—Qualitative analyses typically require a smaller sample size than quantitative analyses. Qualitative sample sizes should be large enough to obtain feedback for most or all perceptions. Obtaining most or all the perceptions leads to the attainment of saturation. Saturation occurs when adding more participants to the study does not result in additional perspectives or information. Glaser and

Strauss (2017) as cited in Hennink and Kaiser (2022) recommend the concept of saturation for achieving an appropriate sample size in qualitative studies. For phenomenological studies, Creswell (1998) recommends 5 to twenty-five 25. According to Subedi (2021), larger samples in qualitative studies hinder an in-depth exploration of the study phenomenon. There are no specific rules when determining the appropriate

sample size in qualitative research. Qualitative sample size may best be determined by the time allotted, resources available, and study objectives (Patton, 2002 as cited in Mullet, 2018). This study's participants were ten (10) grade 10 secondary school students from Optaciano Hilay National High School in Tugbok District, Davao City. The participants were chosen based on the following criteria: they must be currently enrolled as grade 10 students, academic achiev-

ers, have employed writing strategies in their writing tasks, and willing to participate in the study. I utilized the universal sampling design so that the participants are chosen based on the criteria or purpose of the study (Creswell, 2018). It is also known as judgmental, selective, or subjective sampling. The selection of the participants was purposefully done to ensure that the findings would be authentic (Marshall, 1996 as cited in Vasileiou et al., 2018).

2.5. Ethical Considerations—Ethical considerations were crucial because they relate to the moral principles and guidelines that govern my conduct as a researcher. These principles ensure that I carry out my investigations responsibly, treating participants with respect and striving to generate reliable and precise information. To protect participants, maintain scientific integrity, and foster trust within the research community, I adhere to established ethical standards in my research practices (Resnik, 2020). Social value. This concerns the potential benefits and favorable outcomes that research can bring to society, like addressing problems or improving people's quality of life. I evaluate the societal value of my study by acknowledging its potential impact and importance for the larger community. This ensures that resources are directed toward research that has the potential to create significant advantages for society. Informed Consent. This involves obtaining a participant's voluntary agreement to participate in a research study after they and their parents or guardians have been provided with sufficient information about the study's purpose, methods, potential drawbacks, and benefits. In this research involving students, it was my responsibility to ensure that both the participants and their parents or guardians fully understood the study and their rights. This dual layer of explanation allowed them to make an informed decision about participation, thereby preserving the students' auton-

omy and dignity and ensuring parental consent. Vulnerability. The vulnerability of research participants, especially students, pertains to their increased risk of experiencing harm, exploitation, or coercion due to factors such as age, cognitive ability, or socioeconomic status. As a researcher, it was crucial for me to acknowledge and consider the potential vulnerability of these young participants and take appropriate measures to protect them. This involves providing additional safeguards and support, such as obtaining informed consent from both the students and their parents or guardians, ensuring confidentiality, and carefully explaining their rights and the study's procedures in a way they can understand. Additionally, I modified research methods to minimize potential adverse effects, ensuring that the well-being of these students was prioritized throughout the study. Risks, benefits, and safety. In research, it was essential to carefully evaluate the potential risks and benefits associated with participation in a study, as well as to implement measures that safeguard the well-being of participants. These elements involve assessing the potential disadvantages and advantages of participating in a study, along with establishing strategies to ensure the welfare of participants. In this investigation, as the researcher, I meticulously assess and balance these factors, ensuring that the potential benefits outweigh the risks. I put adequate precautions in place to minimize harm while optimizing

the safety of participants, particularly considering the vulnerabilities of student participants. This comprehensive approach was crucial to maintaining ethical standards and protecting the participants throughout the research process. Privacy and confidentiality. Privacy and confidentiality in research are about safeguarding participants' personal information and ensuring their identity remains confidential unless they explicitly consent to disclosure. In the context of this study, I am responsible for implementing appropriate protocols to secure participants' data and maintain confidentiality. This includes anonymizing data, securely storing information, and limiting access to authorized personnel only. These measures are crucial to protect the privacy of student participants and uphold the integrity of the research process. Justice. This concept relates to the equitable allocation of both the advantages and disadvantages resulting from research across various segments of society. In this study, I ensure that my research is inclusive, avoiding the exploitation or exclusion of vulnerable groups. Additionally, I strive to make the benefits of the research accessible to all who could benefit from it. This approach promotes fairness and equity throughout the research process, ensuring that no group bears an undue burden or was left out of the potential gains from the findings. Transparency. Transparency in research encompasses maintaining integrity at every phase of the study, from its conception and execution to the reporting of results. In this study, I offer clear and truthful information regarding my research methodologies and outcomes. Furthermore, I am receptive to examination and feedback. Transparency acts as a catalyst for trust, credibility, and accountability, not only within the research community but also among the general public. This commitment to openness ensures that the process and results of my research are accessible and understandable to all stakeholders involved. The qualification of a researcher. The qualification of a researcher relates to one's academic background, professional experience, and proficiency in a particular area of study, ensuring that one possesses the requisite abilities and knowledge to conduct the research competently. In this investigation, I hold suitable qualifications that showcase my ability to conduct research, analyze data, and interpret the results. My expertise and training provide the foundation necessary to approach this study with a rigorous scientific method and critical analytical skills, ensuring the integrity and validity of the findings. The adequacy of facilities. This addresses the presence and suitability of the essential resources, tools, and infrastructure required to execute a study efficiently and securely. In this research, I guarantee access to appropriate facilities for conducting the investigation. This access facilitates the creation of credible and consistent findings and mitigates potential risks to study participants. Having the right facilities ensures that the data collection and analysis processes are conducted under conditions that uphold the highest standards of research integrity and safety. Community involvement. This encompasses the dynamic involvement and active engagement of community members, stakeholders, or the intended study population throughout the research journey, from initial planning to sharing research outcomes. In this study, I engage the community to guarantee the study's relevance, acceptability, and potential impact. Additionally, this involvement fosters trust and cooperation between me and the community. Engaging with the community not only helps to tailor the research to be more effective and meaningful but also enhances the overall quality and applicability of the results. Plagiarism and fabrication. Researchers should strictly follow principles of academic honesty and integrity. This entails giving proper credit to the work of others, presenting original contributions, and verifying the accuracy and authenticity of data. In this study, I employ tools like plagiarism de-

tectors and maintain thorough documentation of my research procedures to ensure that my work is devoid of plagiarism and that all data and dis-coveries are authentic and reliable. By upholding these principles, I enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the research community.

2.6. Role of the Researcher—As an unbiased research facilitator and promoter, I ensured the research process was conducted fairly, objectively, and without personal bias, prejudice, or influence from outside sources. I create an environment that encourages the open and honest exploration of ideas and promotes fairness in data collection and analysis. This commitment to impartiality helps to uphold the integrity of the research process and ensures that the findings are reliable and representative of the true phenomena being studied. As an expert in qualitative methods, I am familiar with various qualitative research techniques, such as interviews, focus groups, and participant observation. I possess the skills and knowledge necessary to design, conduct, and analyse qualitative studies, ensuring that the research question is satisfactorily addressed and the results are legitimate and dependable. My expertise in these methods allows me to deeply explore complex social phenomena and capture the nuanced experiences of participants, contributing to the validity and reliability of the research findings. As a data collector and keeper, I gather information from various sources such as interviews or observations, ensuring accurate and secure storage of this information. I follow ethical guidelines, safeguard participants' privacy, and ensure data was structured and available for later examination and understanding. This careful management of data helps maintain the integrity of the research process. It supports the production of credible, reliable findings that can be reviewed and utilized by others in the academic community. As a data analyst, I analyze the gathered data to discover trends, patterns, and valuable perspectives by the research query. I utilize meticulous qualitative data analysis methods like coding and thematic analysis to extract significant findings and enrich the knowledge base within my discipline. This approach allows me to deeply understand the data, providing insights that were not only relevant but also contribute significantly to the field, enhancing scholarly discussions and practical applications related to the study topic. Finally, as an organizer and presenter of data, I am tasked with synthesizing and communicating the research findings concisely and coherently. This entails skilfully conveying the study's objectives, approaches, outcomes, and ramifications through written documents, presentations, or alternative means of transmitting information. I ensure the research results are easily accessible and comprehensible to the designated audience. This approach helps to maximize the impact of the findings, ensuring they were not only shared but also understood and utilized by others in ways that can further knowledge and influence practice in the field.

2.7. Data Collection—This study employed a systematic data collection procedure. Several steps were taken to adhere to the proper data collection procedure, which ensured the accuracy and objectivity of the data collection. The following is the step-by-step process of gathering the data needed. Securing endorsement from the Dean of Graduate School, the Schools Division Superintendent, and the School Principal. To initiate the data collection process, I secured endorsements from key stakeholders, including the Dean of the Graduate

School at Rizal Memorial Colleges, the Schools Division Superintendent, the School Principal, and the participants' parents. This process involves submitting formal letters outlining the research objectives and methodology, accompanied by any supporting documents. This crucial step took place within the first week of January 2024, ensuring that all necessary permissions are in place before proceeding with the collection of data. This proactive approach not only facilitates compliance with ethical standards but also fosters a cooperative environment among all parties involved. Asking permission from the Schools Division Superintendent. Upon receiving the endorsement, I requested permission from the school's division superintendent. This requires submitting a formal letter detailing the research proposal and its significance to the educational community. Along with the letter, I attached Chapters 1 and 2 of my dissertation and the research instrument, clearly explaining the study's objectives and the process of participant identification. Moreover, I waited for the response from the Schools Division Superintendent (SDS) before proceeding with the data collection. This step was undertaken during the second week of January 2024, ensuring that all necessary approvals are in place to conduct the research ethically and effectively. Asking for permission from the cluster head. Once permission was granted from the division office, I then sought approval from the cluster head of the cluster from which the school in focus was a part. This step involved submitting a formal request letter to the cluster head, outlining the research's purpose and the expected data collection timeframe. I asked for permission to conduct the study in the second week of

February 2024. Asking for permission from the school head. Once permission was granted, I sought approval from the school head of the selected institution. This step involves submitting a formal request letter outlining the research's purpose and the expected data collection timeframe. I asked for permission to conduct the study during the fourth week of February 2024. Obtaining consent from the participants and their parents. With the school heads' approval, I asked for consent from the research participants, who are students, through informed consent forms that were also provided to their parents or guardians. These forms clearly explain the research purpose, participant rights, and confidentiality measures. This dual-layered consent process ensures that both students and their parents or guardians are fully informed and agree to participate. Asking for consent from both the participants and their parents or guardians was done in the first week of March 2024. Conducting the interview. Upon securing consent from all participants, I scheduled and conducted the interviews using a structured or semi-structured interview guide to ensure consistency and reliability in data collection. The interviews took place on the second week of March 2024. Transcribing the responses of the interviewees. Following the interview sessions, I meticulously transcribed the interviewees' remarks, taking diligent account of non-verbal cues and contextually relevant details. This procedure used audio recordings and field notes to comprehensively capture the breadth of participants' reactions. The transcription of interviewee responses was done for the third week of March 2024.

2.8. Data Analysis—After collecting the data, I embarked on data coding and thematic content analysis. This involves methodically structuring the transcribed data into categories, subcategories, and themes from the interview dialogues. By discerning patterns and connections within the data, I formulate conclusions and glean insights directly related to the research ob-

jectives. This process allows me to interpret the data effectively, ensuring that the findings accurately reflect the experiences and perspectives of the participants. In this study, I employed Creswell's Thematic Analysis approach, which is particularly suited for encompassing a range of perspectives and portrayals in participants' feedback. Adopting thematic analysis authenticates the portrayal of individual components and facilitates categorizing identified patterns within the provided responses. Thematic analysis is a qualitative research technique used to recognize, scrutinize, and interpret patterns or themes present within qualitative data in textual, visual, or other formats. As a qualitative research approach, thematic analysis allows researchers to systematically arrange and dissect complex data sets. It involves searching for overarching themes that encapsulate the narratives embedded within the data. This process necessitates the identification of themes through meticulous examination and repeated review of transcribed data (Dawadi, 2020). This methodical approach helps ensure that the analysis was both comprehensive and reflective of the data collected, providing deep insights into the study's objectives. Therefore, I used Creswell's Thematic Analysis in my research, which necessitated extensive theming and transcript interpretation. According to Caulfield (2020), there are multiple essential phases in Creswell's Thematic Analysis, including familiarization, coding, generating themes, reviewing themes, defining and labeling themes, and writing up. I become fully immersed in the intricacies and subtleties of the content as I become acquainted with the data to begin this process. After that, I start categorizing the data using semantic richness to group different informational components. I created themes that encapsulate the main ideas of the data using these codes. After that, these themes are examined and improved upon to make sure they appropriately depict the dataset. Every theme has a definition and name that elucidates the fundamental ideas. The last step entails combining the themes and insights into a cohesive article that clearly conveys the study's conclusions. This methodical approach guarantees a comprehensive examination and enhances the comprehension of the information.

2.9. Framework of Analysis—The analytical framework in phenomenological research was a methodical and structured approach to data analysis, interpretation, and presentation. In this research study, I made use of Colaizzi's method to analysed data from the interviews and discussions with the participants regarding their lived experiences in metacognitive writing strategies. According to Morrow et al. (2021), Colaizzi's (1978) method features a distinctive seven-step process that offers a rigorous analysis, closely adhering to the data at each stage. This method culminates in a concise yet comprehensive description of the phenomenon under study, which is validated by the participants who experienced it. The effectiveness of this approach relies on rich first-person accounts of experiences, which can be collected through various means. Although face-to-face interviews are common, data can also be gathered from written narratives, blogs, research diaries, online interviews, and other forms. This method enables researchers to uncover emergent themes and explore the intricate relationships between them (Wirihana et al., 2018). Data Familiarization. By reading and rereading the transcripts several times, I aim to fully understand the meanings conveyed by the participants and gain a global sense of the phenomenon being studied. This thorough review process was crucial for fully grasping the nuances of participants' statements, enabling a deeper analysis of their experiences. Identifying Significant Statements. I carefully identify every statement in

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the narratives that was directly related to the phenomenon I am studying. In order to identify and highlight phrases and descriptions that shed light on the particular experiences under study, a thorough examination of the gathered data—such as written narratives or transcripts of interviews—must be conducted. This step was essential to ensuring that my analysis stays on topic and provides a strong basis for future thematic development. Formulating Meanings. After carefully examining the important statements, I determine meanings that are pertinent to the phenomenon. Although Colaizzi admits that complete bracketing was never truly possible, I have to reflexively "bracket" my own presuppositions to stick closely to the phenomenon as experienced. To guarantee that the analysis stays rooted in the participants' real experiences, this process entails putting aside my own interpretations as much as is practical. Clustering Themes. I ensure a rigorous analysis that remains true to the participants' experiences by grouping the identified meanings into themes that are shared by all accounts. Throughout this process, presuppositions must be bracketed, especially to avoid any possible influence from existing theories. By letting the themes naturally arise from the data rather than being influenced by outside forces, this preserves the integrity of the analysis. Developing an exhaustive description. I incorporate every theme generated in the previous step into a comprehensive and all-encompassing description of the phenomenon that I write. By identifying common themes from the participant accounts, this thorough description seeks to convey the essence and complexity of the phenomenon. By taking this step, it was ensured that the final representation presents a comprehensive perspective of the experiences that each participant has had. Producing the fundamental structure. I break down the lengthy explanation into a succinct statement that highlights the key elements

that I believe are crucial to understanding the phenomenon's structure. This succinct synthesis effectively and concisely communicates the essence of the participants' experiences, concentrating on the essential components necessary for comprehending the phenomenon. Seeking verification of the fundamental structure. I ask participants if the fundamental structure statement accurately reflects their experience by returning it to all participants or, in larger studies, to a subsample. I might go back and change the earlier stages of the analysis in light of their comments. Through this iterative process, the validity and credibility of the findings were increased, and the analysis was kept firmly based on the participants' perspectives. The following figure illustrates this rigorous process, highlighting each step to explain the actions taken to comprehensively analyze the data comprehensively. To summarize, the thematic analysis method outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006) consisted of six (6) phases used in analyzing the data. The following steps represent the Colaizzi process for phenomenological data analysis (cited in (Sanders, 2003; Speziale Carpenter, 2007); Each transcript should be read and re-read to obtain a general sense of the whole content; significant statements about the phenomenon under study should be extracted from each transcript. these statements must be recorded on a separate sheet, noting their page and line numbers; meanings should be formulated from these significant statements, and the formulated meanings should be sorted into categories, clusters of themes, and themes; the findings of the study should be integrated into an exhaustive description of the phenomenon under study; the fundamental structure of the phenomenon should be described. Finally, validation of the findings should be sought from the research participants to compare the researcher's descriptive results with their experiences.
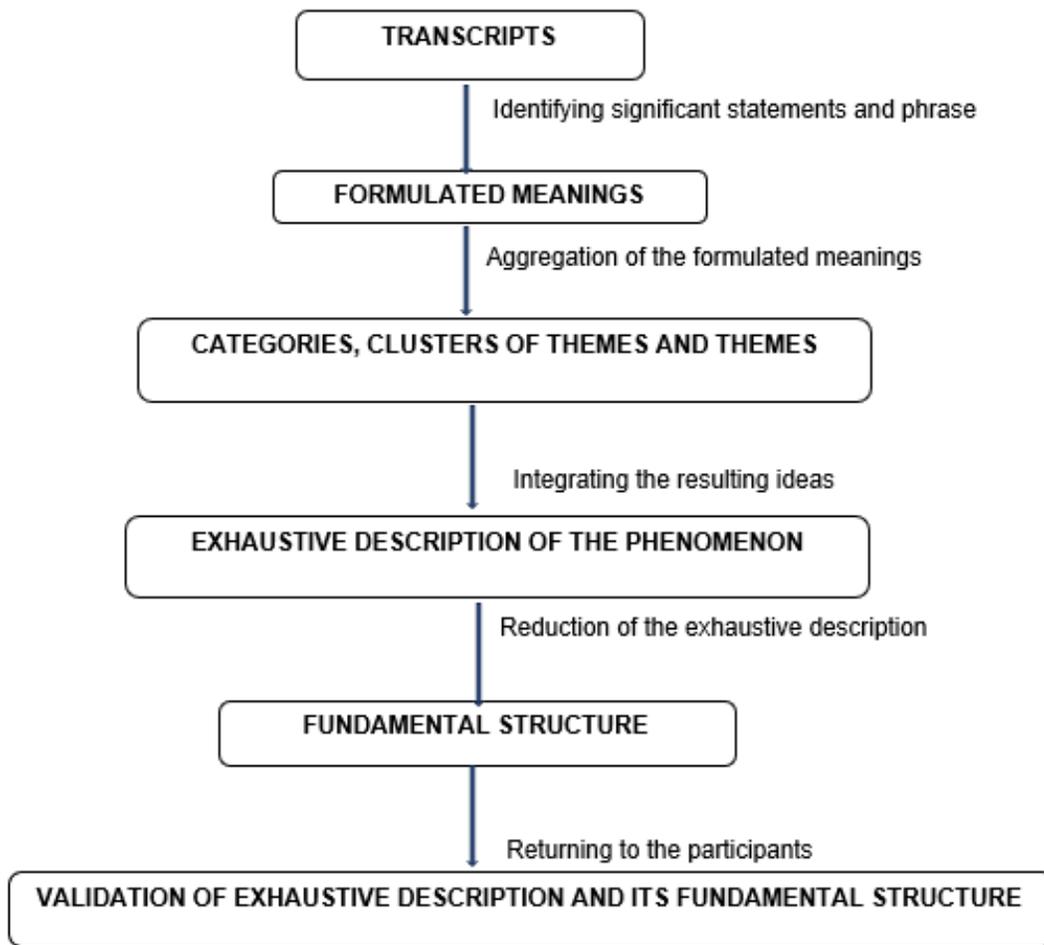
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┌─────────────────────────────┐
│         TRANSCRIPTS          │
└─────────────────────────────┘
              │  Identifying significant statements and phrase
              ▼
     ┌─────────────────────┐
     │ FORMULATED MEANINGS  │
     └─────────────────────┘
              │  Aggregation of the formulated meanings
              ▼
┌──────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ CATEGORIES, CLUSTERS OF THEMES AND THEMES │
└──────────────────────────────────────────┘
              │  Integrating the resulting ideas
              ▼
┌──────────────────────────────────────────┐
│   EXHAUSTIVE DESCRIPTION OF THE PHENOMENON │
└──────────────────────────────────────────┘
              │  Reduction of the exhaustive description
              ▼
     ┌─────────────────────┐
     │ FUNDAMENTAL STRUCTURE │
     └─────────────────────┘
              │  Returning to the participants
              ▼
┌──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ VALIDATION OF EXHAUSTIVE DESCRIPTION AND ITS FUNDAMENTAL STRUCTURE │
└──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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Fig. 2. Analytical Framework of the Study

2.10. Trustworthiness of the Study—The trustworthiness of a study is about how reliable, sensible, and authentic the research results are, ensuring that the conclusions are trustworthy and accurate. In qualitative research, factors like credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability are often used to evaluate how reliable the study was. These considerations are further described below, according to Guba (1981). Credibility. Building credibility entails proving that the results are accurate. Credibility is important for this study because it evaluates if the results accurately represent the realities and experiences of secondary school students who participate in extra-curricular activities. I converse with the participants for a long time in order to gain a thorough understanding of their experiences and to increase my credibility. I also used triangulation, gathering information from a variety of sources, including observations, interviews, and maybe questionnaires. In order to confirm the interpretations, I gave the students a preliminary version of the findings as part of member checking. Transferability. The degree to which the results of this study can be used in different situations or with different populations is referred to as transferability. While the particular insights are closely linked to secondary school students' experiences in a specific educational environment, I gave thorough explanations of the research context and methodology. The study's trans-

ferability was increased because this thorough, rich narrative enables others, including educators, school administrators, and researchers, to assess how well the results apply to comparable contexts or populations. Confirmability. Confirmability deals with the study's objectivity by making sure that the respondents, not my personal prejudices or biases, shaped the findings. I kept a thorough audit trail that details every step of the research process, from data collection to data analysis decisions, in order to ensure confirmability. This methodological transparency makes it possible for other researchers to evaluate the research's objectivity by following the study's development and reviewing the choices made. Dependability. Dependability means proving that the study results are reliable and repeatable in similar situations. This study's

dependability was attained through meticulous documentation of the entire research procedure, including the methods used for data collection and analysis. By ensuring that other researchers can duplicate the study and possibly produce consistent results, such documentation validates the research's dependability. By following these standards, the research not only offers valid and trustworthy conclusions regarding the effects of metacognitive writing strategies on secondary school students' writing performance but it also offers a framework that researchers and other educators could use to compare similar learning environments. This methodology enhances the study's standing in the academic community and provides insightful information for upcoming studies and instructional design.

3.   Results and Discussion

This chapter unveils the outcomes derived through the scrutiny of data acquired from interviews, encompassing the identification of themes and an extensive discourse that addresses the study's objectives. The emerging themes derived from the collected data are thoroughly examined in this chapter. The findings provide a detailed account and background information about the participants, accompanied by pseudonyms assigned to safeguard their identities. The emerging themes for the experiences are time management, lack of resources and support, and grammar and syntax issues. Meanwhile, the emerging themes for the coping mechanisms are goal setting, self-reflection, and checking grammar and mechanics. The following are the themes for the values: using feedback effectively, understanding your personal writing process, and increasing self-awareness.

3.1. Experiences about metacognitive writing strategies—Students have diverse experiences when it comes to employing writing strategies, specifically metacognitive writing strategies. In this study, the first research question sought to unfurl the lived experiences of secondary school students regarding metacognitive writing strategies, which are targeted at improving their writing performance. The experiences of secondary school students are supported by extracted narratives from the interviews and literature from the review of significant literature.

3.1.1.   Time-management—In the in-depth interview, the first emerging theme under the experiences is time-management. According to the participants, time-management is a daunting task during the writing process. Some task are time-constrained, so it requires them to work under time-pressure. Some students have shared that they do not work well under

time-pressure. They have shared the following statements. Time management has been identified as a significant challenge for students in the context of writing, impacting their academic performance and overall learning experience. Turner et al. (2018) examined the time management behaviors of college students and their correlation with writing performance. The researchers found that students who struggled with managing their time effectively often produced lower-quality writing. These students frequently reported feeling overwhelmed by deadlines and lacking the structured approach needed to plan, draft, and revise their work adequately. Additionally, Smith and Hill (2019) highlighted that many students lacked essential skills such as setting realistic goals, prioritizing tasks, and breaking down larger assignments into manageable parts. This is in line with the statements of IDI 3 and IDI 5. The absence of these strategies often led to procrastination, with students delaying the start of their writing until the last minute. This procrastination not only increased stress levels but also resulted in rushed and poorly edited final products. Consistent with the emerging theme is the study of Fu et al. (2020) They explored the impact of time management workshops on improving students' writing skills. The results showed that the students who participated in the workshops demonstrated significant improvements in their writing performance. They were better able to allocate time for different stages of the writing process, such as brainstorming, drafting, and revising, leading to more coherent and polished essays. Further research by Sainz et al. (2019) focused on the role of digital tools in enhancing time management for writing assignments. They found that students who utilized time management apps and digital planners were more successful in organizing their writing tasks and meeting deadlines. These tools helped students to visualize their schedules, set reminders, and track their progress, thereby reducing the likelihood of last-minute cramming. However, the study also noted that the effectiveness of these tools depended on students' discipline in consistently using them. Meanwhile, Mukwevho (2018) synthesized findings from various studies on the relationship between time management and writing performance across different educational levels. They concluded that while time management skills are crucial for effective writing, there is a persistent gap in how these skills are taught and reinforced in educational curricula. The review emphasized the need for integrated time management training within writing instruction, suggesting that early and continuous intervention could help students develop the habits necessary for managing their writing tasks efficiently. This holistic approach could ultimately lead to improved academic outcomes and reduced stress among students.

3.1.2. Lack of resources and support— Aside from the experience of having struggles with time-management. Students have also shared that there is a lack of resources and support given to them. These resources and support encompass several factors that affect their writing performance. The following extracted narratives support the second emerging theme. In the same thread of thought, Wu et al. (2024) highlighted that many schools, particularly those in underfunded districts, do not have adequate access to writing resources such as up-to-date textbooks, writing software, and access to libraries. This scarcity of resources hampers students' ability to practice and improve their writing skills, leading to disparities in academic achievement. Corroborating the above assertion, García and Ramos (2019) conducted research on the availability of writing support services in secondary education. Their findings revealed that many schools lack dedicated writing centers or programs that provide

personalized assistance to students. Without access to such support services, students often struggle with the complexities of writing assignments, including brainstorming, structuring, and revising their work. The absence of tailored guidance can leave students feeling isolated and unsupported in their writing endeavors.

The FGD 2 shares the same perspective with the study of Chen and Li (2020). They the impact of teacher preparedness on students' writing development. The researchers found that in many cases, teachers themselves lack sufficient training in teaching writing effectively. This lack of professional development means that teachers may not be equipped with the latest pedagogical strategies and tools to support student writers. As a result, students receive inconsistent and often inadequate instruction, which can hinder their progress and motivation to improve their writing skills. Similarly, Ng and Newpher (2021) found that schools with limited technological infrastructure struggle to

provide students with access to digital tools that can enhance their writing process, such as word processors, grammar checkers, and online research databases. The digital divide exacerbates existing inequalities, as students without access to these technologies are at a disadvantage compared to their peers in better-resourced schools. Thompson and Allen emphasized the need for equitable access to technology to ensure all students have the tools they need to succeed in writing. Furthermore, Nguyen (2022) highlighted that budget constraints, policy priorities, and socioeconomic disparities all play a role in limiting the resources available to students. Nguyen called for increased investment in educational resources, targeted funding for writing programs, and policies that prioritize equitable access to writing support. Addressing these systemic issues is crucial for providing all students with the opportunities and support they need to develop strong writing skills and achieve academic success.

3.1.3. Grammar and syntax issues—Immersing yourself in writing is a daunting task, more so its technicalities that includes grammar or syntax. In the interview, participants have shared that grammar is a bit overwhelming for them and it hinders them to write fluently because they need to be cautious about grammar. Some of them even admitted that they are not confident about grammar. In the same vein, a study investigated the prevalence of grammatical errors among high school students. They found that a substantial number of students struggle with basic grammatical rules, including subject-verb agreement, tense consistency, and punctuation. These persistent errors often detract from the overall coherence and readability of their essays, indicating a need for more focused grammar instruction in the curriculum (Lipalam et al., 2023). Moreover, Songsiengchai et al. (2023) explored the root causes of syntax issues in student writing. Their

research highlighted that many students lack a deep understanding of sentence structure, leading to frequent run-on sentences, fragments, and misplaced modifiers. The authors emphasized that these syntax errors are not just superficial mistakes but reflect deeper difficulties in understanding and applying the rules of sentence construction. The study recommended that educators incorporate more explicit teaching of sentence structure and syntax into their writing programs. Wang and Chen (2020) shared the same perception with the aforementioned statements. Their study examined the impact of English as a second language (ESL) on students' grammar and syntax proficiency. They found that ESL students face additional challenges in mastering English grammar and syntax due to differences between their native languages and English. This often results in errors such as incorrect word order, improper use of articles, and confusion with verb forms. The study suggested
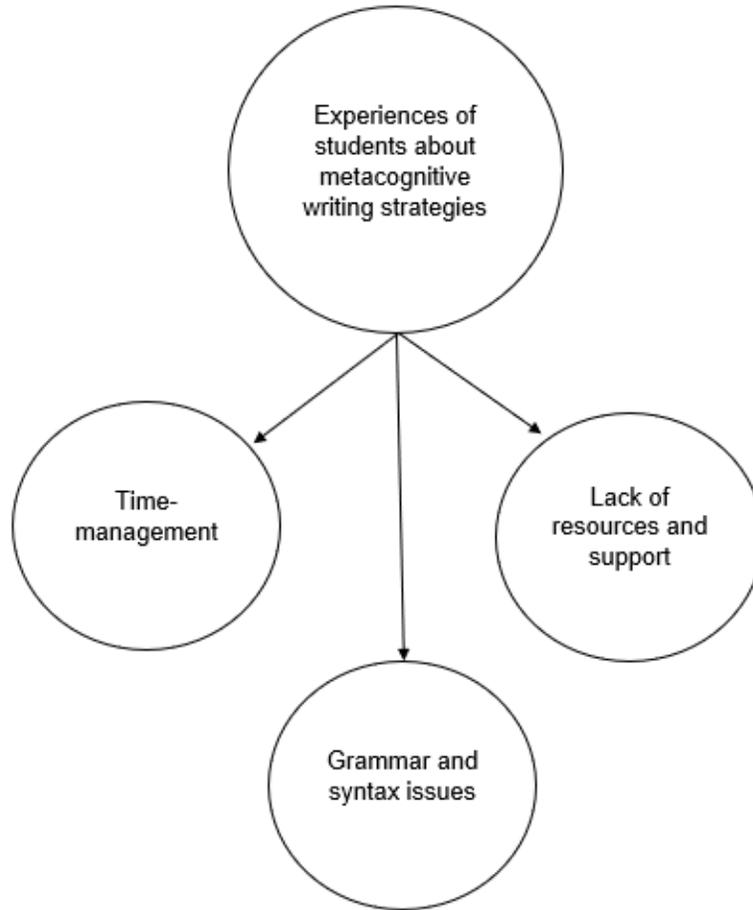
Fig. 3. Experiences of students about metacognitive writing strategies

that ESL students benefit greatly from targeted grammar instruction that addresses these specific linguistic challenges, as well as from ample practice opportunities in a supportive learning environment. Finally, Cintrón-Valentín and García-Amaya (2021) investigated the effectiveness of grammar-checking software, such as Grammarly and Turnitin, in helping students identify and correct their errors. The study found that while these tools are useful for detecting surface-level mistakes, they do not always provide the deeper understanding needed to address underlying issues. García and Thompson recommended using these tools with traditional teaching methods to provide a more comprehensive approach to grammar and syntax instruction. Figure 3 shows students' experiences with metacognitive writing strategies. three themes emerge: management, grammar, and syntax issues, and lack of resources and support.

3.2. Coping mechanisms to improve students' writing performance—Writing is an essential skill in English as a second language (ESL) learning. It also requires learners to develop language proficiency that helps them to produce letters, essays, journals, research papers, and so on. Concisely, it can be defined as a thorough skill that enables learners to stimulate their prior knowledge including vocabulary, grammar, and structure. The art of writing is a dynamic and indispensable skill that enhances our lives in numerous ways. It enhances com-

munication, nurtures academic advancement, contributes to professional success, preserves cultural heritage and historical records, and promotes personal growth. Its significance extends across all facets of existence, establishing itself as a crucial instrument for individuals and communities alike. Metacognitive strategies stand out as perhaps the most influential and efficient tools for boosting students' learning capacities. In the context of writing, metacognitive strategies help students elevate their writing styles and improve their writing abilities. Learners can notably elevate their proficiency in effective planning, monitoring, evaluation, and practical

learning skills by actively employing metacognitive strategies. These methods assume a crucial role in cultivating enhanced learning outcomes, thereby contributing to the development of students into more skilled and accomplished writers (Rivas et al., 2022). The metacognitive strategies employed by students in their writing process are different, but they share the same goal which is to improve their writing abilities. In this context, secondary students share the same metacognitive strategies in their writing, and these strategies are clustered into themes which are thoroughly discussed below.

3.2.1. Goal Setting—Establishing a precise objective and strategically planning the composition process stands out as a paramount aspect of writing. Prior to engaging in the act of writing, it becomes imperative to define a clear goal for the flow of the work. This approach entails a deliberate endeavor to improve and elevate students' writing skills by focusing on specific objectives. The participants of this study shared that one of the metacognitive strategies they used in their writing was setting a goal before they started writing. Planning ahead has made their task easier as they know what flow to follow. Writing with strategies will guide the writers to write accordingly which helps them to produce a well-organized written text. Based on the statements above, students made use of the strategies by planning and setting a goal so that they know what to do and what to focus on in their paper. As they write, they regularly check their progress and whether they are sticking to their goal. Planning is considered the first part of the metacognitive writing strategies. Writing requires an array of cognitive processes, and it is defined as a problem-solving task requiring the metacognitive management of planning, text generation, and review, with recursiveness being a crucial

characteristic of writing. According to Escorcia and Gimenes (2020), among these writing processes, planning is crucial due to its links with working memory and long-term memory, which store writing-related knowledge. The students were able to write effectively because they already had a goal in their minds on how their essays would flow. While IDI 1 wanted to make a clear point in her essay, IDI 2's goal was to make a strong argument. These goals they had in mind served as a guide so that they would not stray from their planned writing piece and elevate their work as well. According to Nejad and Shahrebababki (2018), planning is one of the profound strategies for improving learning and writing, as well as the use of metacognitive strategies. The adoption of planning as a strategy enhances students' goals and how the goals can be effectively accomplished. In the case of the students who employed metacognitive strategies in their creative writing, they were able to write a story that captured what they had in mind. By following their goals, they were able to create a story that their readers liked. The participants deemed goal setting as an important strategy in writing. This is similar to the study conducted by Lee and Bai (2020). They investigated the impact of goal-setting and goal-

checking practices among middle school students. Their research found that students who regularly set specific, measurable goals for their writing assignments and checked their progress against these goals demonstrated significant improvements in writing quality and overall academic performance. The study emphasized the importance of integrating goal-checking practices into the writing curriculum to help students develop a structured approach to their writing tasks. In the same light, Smith and Brown (2019) also conducted a study on the efficacy of goal-checking strategies in college writing courses. Their findings revealed that students who actively engaged in goal checking were more likely to stay focused, manage their time effectively, and produce well-organized and coherent essays. The study concluded that goal checking not only enhances writing outcomes but also promotes a greater sense of accountability and self-discipline among students.

3.2.2.   Self-Reflection—Within metacognitive strategies, the monitoring phase constitutes the subsequent stage, directly following the initial planning phase. Monitoring connotes a process of comprehensive awareness and a follow-up towards delivering a task. Idrees (2012, as cited from Dulas, 2018) lends his voice to defining the monitoring phase and what happens during this phase. He explained that during the monitoring stage, students tend to refer to the teacher for confirmation. They will report or ask questions pertaining to their writing. They are unsure of their writing, and they will develop learning strategies in order to have perfect writing. In short, students in this phase ask for their teachers' guidance and support in their writing by asking for confirmation whether they are taking the right route. They monitor their work with the help of their teacher. However, in this context, monitoring is applied through self-reflection employed by students. The participants of this study revealed that the other metacognitive strategy they employ in their writing process is self-reflection. While writing, they are constantly reflecting on their selves, particularly their emotions and thoughts. By having self-awareness and reflecting on their writing, they were able to identify the recurring errors in their works and acknowledge areas that need improvement. Supporting the above-mentioned theme, Dumlao and Pinatacan (2019) investigated the impact of self-reflection practices in writing performance. The researchers implemented a reflective writing program where students were required to write journals about their writing experiences, challenges, and strategies. The study found that students who engaged in regular self-reflection showed significant improvements in writing clarity, coherence, and overall quality. The findings suggest that self-reflection helps students become more aware of their strengths and weaknesses, enabling them to make more informed adjustments to their writing practices. In the same thread of thought, Brown and Green (2019) explored the effects of guided self-reflection on college students' writing. Their study involved students writing reflective essays on their writing process after each assignment, focusing on what worked well and what needed improvement. The results indicated that guided self-reflection led to enhanced metacognitive awareness and better writing outcomes. Students who participated in the guided self-reflection exercises were more adept at identifying specific areas for improvement and applying effective strategies to address those areas in subsequent writing tasks. This is parallel to the study conducted by Yamac et al. (2020). They examined the role of digital tools in facilitating self-reflection for writing. They introduced an online platform where students could record their reflections

on writing assignments and receive feedback from peers and instructors. The study further postulated that students who used the platform reported increased motivation to reflect on their writing and gained valuable insights from the feedback they received, leading to improved writing skills. Garcia and Martinez (2021) further revealed that self-reflection practices significantly benefited ESL students by helping them recognize linguistic and cultural challenges in their writing. By reflecting on their writing processes and receiving targeted feedback, ESL students were able to develop more effective strategies for overcoming language barriers and improving their writing proficiency. The integration of metacognitive strategies, particularly self-reflection within the monitoring phase, has proven transformative in participants' writing processes. Traditionally seeking confirmation from teachers, the monitoring phase has evolved into a self-directed and introspective approach. Participants consistently demonstrated a heightened awareness of the value of self-reflection during writing, leading to the identification of errors and areas for improvement.

3.2.3. *Checking Grammar and Mechanics*—Whether for academic, professional, or personal purposes, taking the time to ensure correct grammar enhances the impact of your written communication. Checking grammar and mechanics in writing is a fundamental aspect of effective communication, contributing to clarity, credibility, and overall writing quality. The third part of the metacognitive strategies is the evaluation phase. In this context, evaluation was employed by constantly checking the grammar and mechanics of the writing piece written by the students. In the same vein, Chen (2022) conducted a study testing the effects of adding evaluating strategy training into EFL writing instruction on learners' strategy use and writing performance. She said that the evaluating phase includes re-reading, revising and editing, and reconsidering written text and goals. Usher and Schunk (2018) have examined in their study the effectiveness of explicit grammar instruction in high school classrooms. They found that students who received direct teaching on grammatical rules and structures showed significant improvements in their writing quality. The study underscored the necessity of integrating systematic grammar instruction into the writing curriculum to help students understand and apply grammatical concepts more effectively. In the same vein, Turner et al. (2018) investigated the impact of peer review on students' ability to check grammar and syntax in their writing. Their research revealed that students who participated in structured peer review sessions were better at identifying and correcting grammatical and syntactical errors in their own and their peers' work. The collaborative nature of peer review provided students with diverse perspectives and feedback, enhancing their awareness of common mistakes and improving their editing skills. In summary, the themes gathered from the metacognitive strategies employed by students in their writing process include goal setting, self-reflection, and checking grammar and mechanics. These metacognitive writing strategies helped the participants elevate their writing abilities, and they were also able to craft written texts that conveyed clear meaning and effectively communicated their intended message. Figure 4 shows the coping mechanisms to improve students' writing performance, and the three themes emerge; Goal setting and syntax issues, Checking grammar and mechanics, and support. Self-reflection.

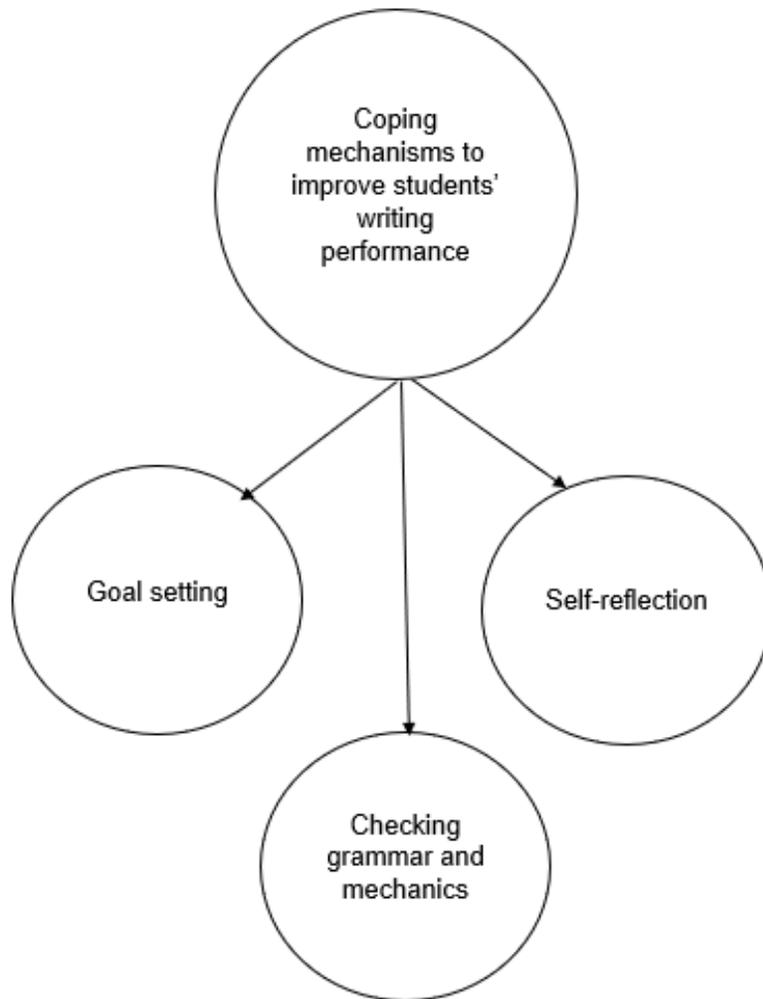*3.3.* *Values Drawn from the Findings of the Study about Metacognitive Writing Strategies—*

Fig. 4. Coping mechanisms to improve students' writing performance

Metacognitive writing strategies are shown to be a promising path for improving the writing proficiency of students in language instruction. If utilized effectively, it can greatly improve the skills and abilities of the students in crafting any written pieces they desire. Aside from that, it also nurtures a range of skills and attitudes that contribute to overall academic and personal growth. Through experiences in the employment of metacognitive strategies, the participants of this study stumbled upon many insights that they shared during the interview. Their responses are clustered into three themes and are thoroughly discussed individually.

3.3.1. Use Feedback Effectively—When learning English as a second language, mastering fluent writing is a fundamental and necessary ability. The emphasis on correct written language is crucial in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) writing classes. According to the study by Gholami-Pasand and Bazarmaj-Haghi (2013), the assessment of student's performance frequently focuses on their correctness in several aspects, including punctuation and spelling. The most crucial role of teachers in this context is to motivate and encourage students to write, and to provide feedback on the performance of the students. Utilizing feedback, may it be negative or positive, is paramount to the continual improvement of one's writing abilities. However, it is important to approach constructive criticism with an open mind and acknowledge it as an opportunity for growth. Without the valuable insights provided by peers and teachers, students may encounter challenges in critically assessing their own writing. Feedback not only offers constructive critique but also catalyzes self-reflection, fostering a more comprehensive understanding of strengths and areas needing improvement within their writing compositions. In essence, the role of feedback goes beyond mere evaluation; it becomes a guiding force empowering students to iteratively refine and elevate their writing abilities. Corroborating the above assertion, Nelson and Schunn (2009, as cited from Yallop and Leijen, 2018) also found that timely, specific, and constructive feedback helped students identify their strengths and areas for improvement, leading to substantial enhancements in writing quality. The study emphasized the importance of providing clear, actionable feedback that guides students in revising and refining their work. Also, Brookhart and Andrade (2019) supports the emerging theme. They posited that students who participated in sessions of giving and using feedbacks effectively were more engaged and demonstrated improved critical thinking and self-assessment skills. They also highlighted the value of peer feedback in promoting deeper understanding and encouraging students to take an active role in their learning process. The study's participants also stated that incorporating metacognitive strategies for writing enabled them to approach constructive criticism with a positive attitude. Rather than seeing feedback as an attack on their distinct writing styles, they saw it as an opportunity to develop. They were able to see constructive criticism as insightful support toward improving their writing skills by utilizing metacognitive strategies. This shift in perception exemplifies how metacognitive strategies encourage a constructive and growth-oriented mindset, creating an environment in which feedback becomes a stepping stone for continuing improvement in writing skills. Feedback on writing has an impact that goes beyond the immediate context of a single course, influencing long-term effects, particularly in improving students' writing abilities. According to Yousefifard and Fathi's (2021) research, improving autonomous motivation is an important part of these long-term consequences. Autonomous motivation, which is recognized as a vital goal

in foundation courses, refers to students' self-driven and intrinsic desire to participate with and flourish in their writing pursuits. Effective feedback, by promoting this sense of autonomy, not only aids in immediate skill refinement but also greatly fosters a long-term, self-motivated commitment to continuing growth in writing skills. In this context, students are motivated to enhance their writing skills by positively embracing teacher and peer feedback. This collaborative approach demonstrates their dedication to using constructive criticism as a valuable resource for ongoing improvement.

3.3.2.   Understand Your Personal Writing Process—In Güneyli (2016, as cited from Moliner, 2021), the concept of writing is described broadly as a multidimensional process. Writing is portrayed as more than just conveying ideas under this framework; rather, it emerges as a dynamic endeavor that deeply integrates the writer's emotions, opinions, thoughts, and past experiences. This participation is directed by the structural framework of language rules and the use of letters. In essence, Güneyli's depiction implies that writing goes beyond mere intellectual conveyance and enters the world of personal expression, where the individual's emotional environment and prior experiences play an important role in forming the written tale. Based on the interviews with the participants, knowing their personal writing styles helped them write effectively. Their written pieces became better when they were aware of how they wrote. Flower and Hayes (1981) define writing as a recursive and non-linear process. In this cyclical process, writers cycle back and forth, exhibiting a dynamic relationship with the evolving text. This repetitive nature emphasizes the idea that the written work itself becomes a significant resource for the writer, acting as a stimulus for the extension and refinement of ideas. The participants stated that by using metacognitive writing strategies, they were able to identify their writing preferences, which improved and smartened their writing. Knowing their writing process and finding their writing styles helped them become more conscious of where they are strong and where they are weak, allowing them to refine and enhance where they are lacking. The emerging theme is parallel with the idea of Hayes and Flower (1980, as cited from Rahmat, 2020). They examined how self-awareness of the writing process influences student writers' effectiveness. They found that students who had a clear understanding of their own writing stages—from planning and drafting to revising and editing—produced more coherent and polished essays. This study highlighted the importance of teaching students to reflect on and articulate their personal writing processes to enhance their writing skills. Additionally, Moliner (2021) conducted research on the benefits of reflective writing practices. They have revealed that students who engaged in reflective writing were better able to identify their strengths and weaknesses, leading to more targeted improvements in their writing. Smith and Wrigley emphasized that understanding one's personal writing process through reflection can foster greater self-regulation and autonomy in writing tasks. Corroborating the above assertion, Zimmerman and Schunk (2018) have explored the relationship between metacognitive awareness and writing performance among high school students. They discovered that students who actively engaged in metacognitive practices, such as setting specific goals, monitoring their progress, and adjusting their strategies, showed significant improvements in their writing outcomes. The researchers concluded that developing a deep understanding of one's personal writing process through metacognitive awareness not only improves writing quality but also enhances students' overall academic performance.

3.3.3. Increased Self-Awareness—Self-awareness is a necessary component of metacognitive writing processes. It entails being aware of your ideas, feelings, behaviors, and motivations in relation to your writing process. Improving your writing self-awareness can lead to better decision-making, a better understanding of your strengths and shortcomings, and more conscious engagement with the writing process. According to insights gathered from participant interviews, the adoption of metacognitive strategies in their writing significantly heightened their self-awareness. Through self-reflection, the participants discovered more about their writing preferences. This heightened self-awareness has translated into an improvement in the quality of their writing. Based on their narratives, self-awareness has greatly improved their writing abilities because they are more mindful of what they include in their writing compositions. By knowing what they want to convey and how to convey it, they are able to carry out the message they want to deliver effectively. According to Zimmerman and Schunk (2018) students who demonstrated higher levels of self-awareness were better able to set realistic goals, monitor their progress, and adjust their writing strategies accordingly. This heightened self-awareness improved writing quality, as students were more adept at identifying and addressing their weaknesses. They also emphasized the need for educational programs to incorporate activities that enhance students'

self-reflective skills. Also parallel with the emerging theme is the idea of Harris and Graham (2018). Their research highlighted that student who practiced metacognitive strategies, such as self-monitoring and self-evaluation, showed significant improvements in their writing tasks. These students were more likely to engage in thoughtful planning, consider their audience, and review their work critically. Harris and Graham concluded that fostering self-awareness through metacognitive training can help students become more independent and influential writers, capable of producing coherent and well-structured texts. In synthesizing the outcomes and discussions of this study, several themes emerged from in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with secondary school students. The metacognitive writing strategies utilized by secondary students encompassed goal setting, self-reflection, and checking grammar and mechanics. Regarding its impact on students' writing performance, identified themes included technical proficiency, improved clarity of thought, and enhanced overall clarity and structure. Moreover, insights in language education and teaching derived from the study's findings encompassed the effective utilization of feedback and understanding one's unique writing process. Figure 5 shows the Values drawn from the study's findings, and the three themes emerge: Use feedback effectively, increase self-awareness, and Understand the personal writing process.

4. Implications and Future Directions

This chapter encapsulates the study's summary, drawing implications and outlining future directions based on the findings. I employed a qualitative phenomenological method utilizing thematic analysis to meet the research objectives. Following Cresswell's (2006) guidelines, I utilized open-ended questions in interviews to gain an authentic understanding of participants' experiences. Moreover, I encouraged participants to articulate their definitions and meanings of the explored phenomenon—the narratives of secondary school students regarding their use of metacognitive strategies in the writing process.
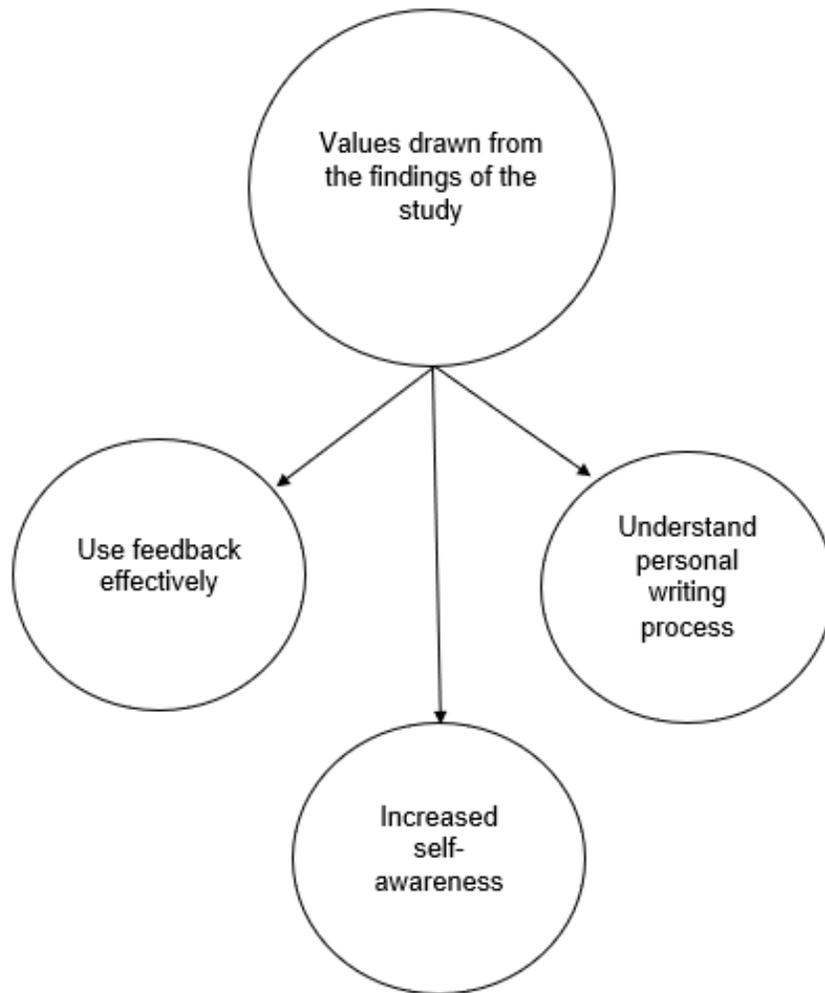
4.1. Findings—

Fig. 5. Values drawn from the findings of the study

The study aimed to uncover metacognitive writing strategies used by secondary school students, examine their effects on the writing process, and explore language education and teaching insights related to utilizing these strategies. Three themes emerged from the metacognitive writing strategies employed by secondary school students regarding their effects on the students' writing processes. Lastly, I found three recurring themes regarding language education and management values. The first research question unfurled the challenges encountered by secondary school students in employing metacognitive writing strategies. The first theme is time management. From the participants' narratives, writing is a challenging task alone, more so with a time constraint. They have expressed their struggle to organize their thoughts, think of ideas, and write on paper. One actually admitted that they encounter writer's block, which hinders the accomplishment of their writing task. The second emerging theme concerns the lack of resources and support. These resources and support come from a wide array of factors that affect the students' writing performance. They have mentioned the lack of updated textbooks and access to libraries. Moreover, they also mentioned that they did not know any writing strategy but employed it without knowing what it was called. The third and final theme under the first research question is the grammar and syntax issues. The students are considered English as a Second Language (ESL) learners; they are not native speakers of the target language. They must dedicate ample time and effort to knowing the language and its grammar because it is essential in writing. However, they have shared that they still have difficulty figuring out whether they are applying correct grammar rules in their outputs. Three distinct themes have been identified considering the writing strategies utilized by secondary school students during the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. The first one is

the goal setting. The participants shared that they first establish clear and specific goals to follow before they start writing. These established goals serve as guidelines for how their writing composition will flow. As the students write, they constantly check their progress to know if they are still on the right track to their desired goals. This strategy helps them enhance their focus, motivation, and writing effectiveness. The second theme highlights secondary school students' strategic use of self-reflection to enhance their writing skills. By consciously examining their writing processes, individuals gain insights into strengths and areas requiring improvement. The participants in the study revealed their utilization of journals for this purpose, allowing for structured documentation of thoughts and experiences throughout the writing journey. Through this process, they identified recurring errors and acknowledged specific areas needing improvement. This intentional self-awareness and reflection facilitate error correction and contribute to an overall mindset of continuous learning and refinement, fostering the development of more proficient and effective writers. The final theme in the metacognitive writing strategies employed by secondary school students centers on continuously checking grammar and mechanics. Students emphasize the significance of paying meticulous attention to their written compositions' structure and grammar to accurately and effectively convey their intended messages. They recognize that revising and re-editing are integral parts of the writing process, ensuring the presence of minimal to no mistakes in their papers. This meticulous approach reflects their commitment to delivering clear and error-free written communication. Lastly, the final aim of this study is to gain language education and teaching values regarding the students' utilization of metacognitive writing strategies. Three themes emerged under this category. The first theme discusses how to use feedback effectively. The partici-

pants have expressed that feedback from their teachers and peers enabled them to identify the areas that need improvement. Constructive criticism had been a hot topic during the interview, but they shared that they use it to improve their writing abilities instead of taking it personally. The second theme was all about understanding your writing process. Since everyone carries a distinct personality and experience, they also have different writing preferences. This insight, drawn from the study, focuses on how knowing your writing style elevates the quality of your writing composition. The participants shared that discovering their writing style and being aware of their preferences enabled them to create written pieces where they could freely share their emotions and thoughts without any restrictions. Increased self-awareness was the last theme for this category, and it discusses how employing metacognitive writing strategies enabled the participants to recognize their writing patterns. Also, by being aware of their capacities, they could enhance their strengths and focus on their weaknesses to make up for what they lacked.

4.2. Implications—Writing was more than just putting words on paper; it was a transformative journey that blends imagination, critical thinking, and personal expression. As students navigate through the labyrinth of ideas, sentences, and paragraphs, they learn to communicate their thoughts and discover their unique voices. Each draft represents a step closer to clarity, a deeper understanding of the subject, and a more refined skill set. The process, often punctuated by moments of frustration and revelation, teaches resilience and the power of revision. Ultimately, student writing becomes a canvas of growth, showcasing their academic progress and evolving perspectives and creativity. In this study, employing strategy in writing was crucial as it transformed the process from a chaotic endeavor into a structured, purposeful activity. Metacognitive writing strategies allowed writers to plan their approach, set clear objectives, and manage their time effectively, ensuring that each stage of the writing process, from brainstorming to final revisions, was thoughtfully executed. It enhanced the coherence and clarity of the work by ensuring that ideas were logically organized and well-developed. Also, using strategies such as outlining, drafting, and revising helps writers identify and address weaknesses, ultimately improving the quality of their writing. Using strategy, students enhance their efficiency and productivity and develop their critical thinking and analytical skills, leading to more polished and impactful writing. The study participants were secondary school students. They were chosen because they were exposed to various writing tasks. They write about several topics, explore different writing styles, learn to employ writing strategies and go along their writing journey. The interview shed light on their experiences employing writing strategies. Some of them did not know they were already employing metacognitive writing strategies. It also illuminated their strategies to improve their writing performance in school. Going back to the study's foundation, the theoretical underpinning of the study was anchored on Flavell's Theory of Metacognition (1979). The theory conceptualized the process of knowing and regulating the students' knowledge in order to maximize their learning. Metacognitive strategies are mental executive skills that control cognitive activities and ensure a cognitive goal is achieved. These components of this strategy break down the essential parts one has to go through in writing. In the current study, the metacognitive theory was fit to serve as a theoretical anchorage. Through the theory, the research was able to unravel what metacog-

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nitive strategy was, what strategies belong to this category, and, most importantly, how students utilize these strategies in their compositions. Meanwhile, the Academic Performance by Elger (2007). According to this theory, the higher academic performance of students would increase their capability, capacity, skills, motivations, and knowledge. Meaning that stu-dent perform best in their academics, and at the same time, they learn and grow. This theory helped the researcher understand how the students' writing performance has improved due to the strategies they have employed. It also reinforces the effects of the strategies employed toward the students' writing performance and their capacity, capability, skills, and knowledge.

4.3. Future Directions—This study offers an in-depth exploration of the metacognitive writing strategies employed by secondary school students, its effects on their writing processes, and language education and teaching insights drawn from the interviews made. By exploring the metacognitive writing strategies utilized by secondary school students, valuable data was collected to inform recommendations, suggestions, and future directions for the key stakeholders in education, such as policymakers, administrators, teachers, and future researchers. The findings of this study serve as a foundation for evidence-based decision-making and provide practical guidance by informing instructional practices, curriculum development, and professional development initiatives, ultimately contributing to the enhancement of students' writing skills and cognitive abilities. For Policy Makers. Policymakers may encourage the use of metacognitive writing processes in education by incorporating them into standards, investing in teacher training programs, and funding research activities. Allocating resources for professional development, fostering multidisciplinary collaboration, and supporting the use of instructional technology were all critical elements. Policymakers can advocate for complete curricula that clearly integrate metacognitive aspects, provide assessment tools for these skills, and encourage a growth mindset culture. Engaging all stakeholders in communication and collaboration ensures a comprehensive and effective implementation of metacognitive methods in education. For School Administrators. School administrators can work with educators to smoothly integrate these strategies into the curriculum, allocate resources for teacher development, and build an environment of observation and feedback. Providing instructional resources and engaging parents in recognizing the value of metacognitive abilities were critical stages. Administrators should constantly evaluate the impact of metacognitive writing strategies, making changes depending on feedback, to maximize their effectiveness. They provide an environment that encourages metacognitive development and successful writing skills. For Teachers. Teachers play an important role in implementing metacognitive writing skills in the classroom. Continuous professional growth is necessary to improve their expertise in these approaches. Collaborating with colleagues allows for smooth incorporation into lesson planning and curriculum. Explicit education, modeling, and promoting reflection are essential components of successful implementation. Giving constructive criticism, addressing individual needs, and using technology all help students discover good writing skills. Staying current on research ensures that instructors remain at the forefront of metacognitive teaching approaches, which improve students' writing skills and lifelong learning capacities. For Students. Students may actively incorporate metacognitive writing strategies into their daily routines. They may be focus on planning, monitoring, and evaluating their writing to improve their skills. Setting

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clear goals, seeking regular feedback, and reflecting on their progress are essential steps. Students may utilize available resources, including technology and collaborative opportunities, to enhance their learning experience. Embracing a growth mindset and being open to continuous improvement will help them develop strong writing abilities and foster lifelong learning and critical thinking skills For Researchers. Future researchers may look into individual characteristics, digital technology integration, and tailored interventions. Cross-disciplinary collaboration can provide a more complete knowledge, while research into effective teacher training and support was critical. Longitudinal investigations on the transferability of metacognitive skills and cultural impacts present exciting opportunities. Additionally, future researchers may conduct quantitative studies to measure the effectiveness of metacognitive processes and investigate their long-term impact on academic achievement beyond writing skills. Incorporating these processes into examinations and addressing these issues can lead to greater practical applications and comprehension in various educational environments.

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