AN EXPLORATORY STUDY ON WRITING SUPPORT FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

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Writing support for graduate students is one of the top concerns in the field of graduate writing education and research. The need of graduate writing support through communal writing practice opportunities has not been explored empirically yet. The main purpose of the study is to explore graduate student perception to develop and test a graduate writing support model. In the small-scale study, the development of a writing support model, using Exploratory Factor Analysis, was based on a total of 302 graduate students. This study suggests the reliability of the survey instrument for further data collection to confirm the validity of the model. In the large-scale study, the validity of the model was tested based on a total of 1095 graduate students across the USA. Using Confirmatory Factor Analysis, this study verifies the five-factor structure of the hypothesized writing support model. The results confirm that the writing support model with a reduced 26-item scale fitted model meets the standard of goodness of fit criteria and confirms the validity of the final writing support model. Therefore, the study provides the conceptual background of the need of writing support for graduate students, develops a theoretical framework for supporting graduate writers in communal setting, develops a survey instrument, identifies a five-factor model, tests the internal structure of the model, confirms the validity of the model, and proposes a need assessment tool for promoting communal writing practices.

Key words: Writing support model, Graduate student perception, Writing center tutoring, Collaborative writing practices, Exploratory Factor Analysis, Confirmatory factor analysis.