

# FOSTERING ESL STUDENTS' MOTIVATION IN WRITING THROUGH THE INTEGRATION OF ICT: A FOCUS ON TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigated the motivation in English writing by using Information and communication technology (ICT) in a public secondary school. The objectives of this study are to examine the impact of using ICT on ESL students' motivation to engage in writing skills, and to explore how teachers incorporate ICT into ESL writing instruction to enhance motivation among students. This study used qualitative approach as the main approach by implementing semi-structured interview and open-ended questionnaire as the instruments. A total of eight respondents including two English teachers and 6 students participated in this research. The results revealed that ICT significantly enhances student motivation and engagement, making the learning more enjoyable and less monotonous, helping students clarify doubts and develop ideas more quickly especially in writing lesson. Implications of the study are enhanced student engagement and motivation, and improved learning and understanding in English writing lessons. Future research for this study is recommended due to the fact that majority of secondary schools in Malaysia such as rural area might need a better ICT implementation especially in English writing lesson. Addressing these issues could involve exploring how to improve ICT infrastructure, provide targeted professional development for teachers, and develop strategies to incorporate technology into curricula more effectively.

**Keyword(s):** *ESL writing, motivation, ICT, impact, engagement*

## INTRODUCTION

Information and communication technology (ICT) has been a worldwide phenomenon since the birth of devices such as television, radio, telegraph and much more. Throughout history, human civilization has been using many different types of ICT to communicate and share information with each other. Fu (2013) stated that the internet is full of resources, and information can be learned via audio files, visual displays, video clips, and more. The use of ICT for educational purposes and instruction has also become widespread across the world. This has helped to close the gap of communication so that students and educators can make use of ICT effectively for teaching, learning, and assessment. Likewise, schools in Malaysia advocate for the use of ICT in lessons. The use of ICT can have a huge impact on the mastery of difficult subjects such as English.

In English language learning, there are four types of skills that must be mastered by the learners which are speaking, listening, reading, and writing. This study focuses on writing skills because it is one of the most difficult skills to master. The use of ICT can be a motivational factor to increase students' interest in mastering writing. It is crucial to emphasize students' motivation for learning the English language, as it plays an important role in making them effectively utilize ICT for educational purposes.

This study centers on delving into the effects of integrating technology into secondary education, specifically how it impacts students' academic performance and engagement. The primary goal is to investigate how introducing digital tools and resources in the classroom influences both learning outcomes and students' overall interest and participation. The core idea is based on the belief that effectively integrating technology has the potential to enrich traditional teaching methods, injecting more dynamism and interactivity into the learning process. Through an exploration of the connections between technology usage, academic success, and student engagement, the research aims to provide valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and researchers. Ultimately, the findings aim to guide the development of strategies to enhance the educational experience in school.

There are two objectives in this study; to examine the impact of using ICT on ESL students' motivation to engage in writing skills, and to explore how teachers incorporate ICT into ESL writing instruction to enhance motivation among students.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### ***Motivation in Learning***

One of the past studies that are related with motivation is *The Importance of Students' Motivation for Their Academic Achievement – Replicating and Extending Previous Findings* by Steinmayr et al. (2019). The objective of this study was to determine if the findings reported earlier could be duplicated by assessing ability self-concepts, task values, goals, and achievement motives at the same level of specificity as the achievement criteria.

This study's results indicated that examinations of relative importance indicated that, among the factors studied, domain-specific ability self-concept, motives, task values, and learning goals excluding performance goals accounted for a noteworthy portion of the variance in grades, with ability self-concept emerging as the most influential predictor among all the factors considered.

### ***Writing Skill in Education***

In Malaysia, writing skills are one of the most important elements of ESL teaching. However, there are obviously some challenges when teaching ESL writing. Palanisamy et al. (2021) prove that proficiency in writing skills encompasses not only mastery of grammatical and rhetorical devices but also competence in conceptual and judgmental elements. Students express their thoughts using everyday language in both spoken and written forms, and grammar, playing a crucial role in writing, provides essential information for readers to understand the intended meaning (Palanisamy et al., 2021).

## *ICT in Education*

Pheng et al. (2021) emphasized that in contemporary society, technology is extensively utilized by students, particularly those born after 1995, identified as Generation Z, who are considered digital natives, having grown up in the digital era and being accustomed to incorporating technology into their everyday routines. On the other hand, Malaysian ESL teachers are recognized for employing conventional methods and advocating the utilization of model essays as an instructional approach for teaching writing skills to students (Pheng et al., 2021).

### *Theoretical Approach*

The selected theory is Self-Determination Theory where the hypothesis suggests that goal-directed actions are influenced by three inherent psychological requirements such as autonomy or the desire to have control over one's actions, competence or the aspiration to achieve desired results and attain mastery, and relatedness or the need to establish connections with others within every individual (Wang et al., 2019). Wang (2019) also stated that there exist four primary categories of motivation or behavioral regulations characterized by varying levels of self-determined motivation which are intrinsic, identified, introjected, and external motivation.

As per the Self-Determination Theory literature and the motivational sequence outlined by Vallerand et al. (1999, as cited in Wang et al., 2019), it is theorized that when the psychological needs of students are fulfilled, there would be a positive correlation with autonomous motivation and as a result, this autonomous motivation is expected to increase enjoyment and perceived value, along with reduced feelings of pressure.

## **METHODS AND SAMPLING**

Various research methods exist, each employing distinct instruments for data acquisition. These diverse methods may involve the use of instruments like questionnaires, interviews, laboratory equipment, or software tools, each chosen to suit the nature of the data being sought. The thorough consideration of research methods is essential for ensuring the robustness and validity of the research outcomes. In this study, the researcher used qualitative approach while interview as the methods.

This research focuses on secondary school teachers and students from a public school in Sabah, Malaysia. The total samples for this study are eight respondents consisting of two groups of teachers and students; 2 teachers and 6 students. 6 of the respondents are female and the other 2 are male.

In this research, the interviews and questionnaires were conducted inside of the school area with an optimum place to make sure that the respondents are comfortable answering the questions. As for the respondents among the teachers, the interviews were conducted after they are free from any classes on that particular day. On the other hand, questionnaires were distributed to the second group of respondents which are the students. Table 1 indicates the participants' demographic information.

**Table 1:** Participants' demographic information.

<b>Names</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>
T1	Female	31
T2	Female	46

S1	Female	16
S2	Female	16
S3	Male	13
S4	Male	13
S5	Female	13
S6	Female	14

## **FINDINGS & DISCUSSION**

The study revealed that ICT significantly enhances student motivation and engagement, making the learning more enjoyable and less monotonous, helping students clarify doubts and develop ideas more quickly especially in writing lesson.

***Research Objective 1: To examine the impact of using ICT on ESL students' motivation to engage in writing skills.***

### ***Students' Engagement and Motivation***

Integrating ICT into learning can enhance the overall experience. Students listened to music while studying or watch educational videos, which can create a more relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere. This approach helps alleviate boredom and fatigue, making learning more engaging. For example, S4 mentioned,

(1) I feel fun when using ICT in writing lesson.

### ***Learning and Understanding***

The instant availability of information enables students to swiftly resolve uncertainties and reinforce their understanding. This quick access to resources can speed up the learning process. When it comes to writing, the students must be provided with multiple sources of information to cater their creativity. As a proof, S6 stated,

(2) I can make the essay faster than before.

### ***Hypothetical Scenario Without ICT***

Without multimedia tools, the learning experience may become more monotonous, potentially reducing student interest and motivation. Traditional teaching methods might be less engaging, particularly for students who are accustomed to digital technologies. When students are exposed to diverse multimedia resources, they are more likely to stay interested and motivated, as these tools can present information in more relatable and accessible ways. S3 explained,

(3) ...if ICT is not being used in English writing lesson, most people will not be interested to learn English writing lesson.

*Research Objective 2: To explore how teachers incorporate ICT into ESL writing instruction to enhance motivation among students.*

### **Motivation and Autonomy**

Incorporating ICT tools like videos and interactive quizzes into lessons enhances the learning experience, making it more engaging and enjoyable for students. Malaysian ESL teachers are known for using traditional methods and promoting the use of model essays as a strategy for teaching writing skills to students (Pheng et al., 2021). In other words, using traditional method in teaching cannot boost the students' motivation in English writing lesson. T1 emphasizes that,

(4) We can use ICT to look up at sentence examples, and give students new ideas to consider in their writing.

Additionally, T2 described,

(5) ...educational websites or online quizzes can make learning more fun and interactive, which helps keep their interest levels high.

### **Classroom Dynamics and Students' Behavior**

Students generally show greater interest and enthusiasm when ICT is incorporated into the classroom, which results in higher levels of participation and increased confidence. YouTube, especially with features like captions and customizable settings such as font size and color (known as enhanced captions), significantly improved learners' English writing accuracy over a five-month period (Alobaid, 2021). T2 explained that,

(6) Over time, they become more comfortable and confident with the technology, which is reflected in their writing.

Furthermore, T1 similarly saying,

(7) My students are always excited every time I bring ICT into classroom, or when we go to the computer lab.

## **CONCLUSION**

Generally, researcher is recommending for future research on this study due to the fact that majority of secondary schools in Malaysia such as rural area might need a better ICT implementation especially in English writing lesson. Addressing these issues could involve exploring how to improve ICT infrastructure, provide targeted professional development for educators, and develop strategies to incorporate technology into curricula more effectively.

The results from this study indicate that ICT greatly boosts student motivation and engagement by making learning more enjoyable and dynamic through the use of multimedia resources and interactive quizzes. These tools reduce monotony, assist students in resolving uncertainties, and accelerate their idea development.

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