The Effects of Writing Instructors' Motivational Strategies on Student Motivation

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Abstract: While the last decade has witnessed a growing body of research on student motivation in second language acquisition, research about the impact of writing instructors' motivational strategies on student motivation has remained underexplored. In order to fill this important gap, this study, guided by motivational strategy framework, investigates the effect of writing instructors' motivational strategies on student motivation. Participants were 344 first-year undergraduate students taking a writing course at a university in Singapore. Classroom observation schemes, student surveys, and surveys with writing instructors were collected. Findings show that the more the writing instructors reported using strategies in generating students' initial motivation in the classroom, the more the students reported having positive attitude and improved self-confidence in the writing course. This study contributes new knowledge to the field by relating writing instructors' motivational strategies to students' positive attitude in learning, the feeling of success in written assignments, and their self-confidence.

Introduction

In the past decade, several international studies have examined the issue of teachers' motivational strategies, as a result of the growing concern for student learning enhancement worldwide (Cheng & Dőrnyei, 2007; Dőrnyei & Csizér, 1998; Guilloteaux & Dőrnyei, 2008; Williams & Williams, 2011). Attention has been given to educators to discover motivational strategies that can capture students' attention and improve their attitude in learning as well as their self-confidence in language classrooms. The need to examine students' motivation in learning and teachers' motivational strategies has also been the focus of research internationally (Lo & Hyland, 2007; Towndrow, Koh, & Tan, 2008).

There remains an insufficient understanding of how teachers' use of motivational strategies may enhance student motivation (Cheng & Dőrnyei, 2007; Guilloteaux & Dőrnyei, 2008). The need to investigate teachers' motivational strategies in relation to demonstrated student motivation is particularly important in the higher education setting, where there is scarcity of such studies based on a sound theoretical framework. The majority of the existing studies (Cheng & Dőrnyei, 2007; Dőrnyei & Csizér, 1998) depended mostly on teachers' self-reports on the frequency of using the strategies and their opinion on the effectiveness of applying those strategies in classrooms. They failed to document objective effects of the motivational strategies on the students. There are published quantitative studies with a sound theoretical

framework that examines the effect of teachers' motivational strategies on demonstrated student motivation (Guilloteaux & Dőrnyei, 2008; Moskovsky et al., 2013). One limitation of purely quantitative research is that, according to Dőrnyei (2001, p. 193), quantitative data 'average out responses across the whole sample, and by working with concepts of averages it is impossible to do justice to the subjective variety of an individual life'.

This study is a response to the need for a mixed-methods approach in identifying the connections between instructors' motivational strategies and exhibited student motivation in learning academic writing skills. It is a study in the context of a first year writing course for undergraduate students in Singapore.

Contextual literature
Defining Motivation

Motivation can be defined as 'a force that activates, directs, and sustains goal-directed behavior' (Liu, Wang, & Ryan, 2016, p. 1). Literature in education psychology reveals that motivation, related to the human mind, is an abstract concept which 'explain(s) why people think and behave(s) as they do' (Dőrnyei, 2001, p. 1). In language education research, motivation to write in a second language (L2) is influenced by social-cultural and contextual factors, as well as instructional practice (Kormos, 2012). These factors play an important role in impacting 'the goals the L2 writers desire to achieve in or through their L2 writing' (Kormos, 2012, p. 398). Thus, motivation is context-sensitive and goal-specific (Sternberg, 2017), and is closely related to social-cultural-contextual factors and pedagogical practice.

Student Motivation in Higher Education

It is essential to understand the role of motivation in student behavior in the process of educating students to become autonomous learners (Liu, Wang, & Ryan, 2016). In higher education, the current literature is lacking in how teachers' strategies to generate students' initial motivation, as well as maintain and protect students' motivation, may impact students' attitude in learning academic writing. Research has shown that teachers' use of motivational strategies influences their students' attitude and engagement in language classrooms (Cheng & Dőrnyei, 2007; Dőrnyei, 1994; Guilloteaux & Dőrnyei, 2008). Guilloteaux and Dőrnyei (2008, p. 72) write, 'The significant positive correlations we found between the teacher and student measures are particularly strong within the context of second language motivation research, thereby providing powerful evidence that the teacher's motivational practice does matter'.

Motivational Strategies

In the current study, motivational strategies refer to teachers' practice to enhance student motivation in learning, that is, 'instructional interventions applied by the teacher to elicit and stimulate student motivation' (Guilloteaux & Dőrnyei, 2008, p. 57). Other scholars (Alison, 1993; Dőrnyei, 1994; Oxford & Shearin, 1994; Williams & Burden, 1997) also proposed various motivational strategies to promote students' motivation in classroom learning. However, these strategies are not theoretically grounded (Guilloteaux & Dőrnyei, 2008, p. 57).

A systematic framework to study motivational strategies was proposed by Dőrnyei's (2001, p. 29). His framework consists of four dimensions: (a) creating basic motivational conditions by establishing a good teacher-student rapport, creating a pleasant and supportive classroom atmosphere, and generating a cohesive learner group with appropriate group norms, (b) generating initial motivation by using strategies designed to increase the learners' expectancy of success and develop positive attitudes toward a particular language course or language learning in general, (c) maintaining and protecting motivation by promoting situation-specific task motivation, providing learners with experiences of success, allowing them to maintain a positive social image, and promoting learner autonomy, and (d) encouraging positive retrospective self-evaluation by promoting adaptive attributions, providing effective and encouraging feedback, increasing learner satisfaction, and offering grades in a motivational manner. In the current study, Dőrnyei's motivational strategy framework was adopted because it takes into account teachers' diverse behavior in language classrooms and students' learning at different stages of instruction.

Studies of Motivational Strategies

Over the past two decades, the literature on motivational strategies has provided teachers with increasing applicable ideas to motivate their students (Dőrnyei, 2007; Dőrnyei & Csizér, 2002; Dőrnyei & Murphey, 2003; Kim, 2009; Pintrich & Schunk, 2002). However, these existing non-research studies (i.e. pedagogical ideas / suggestions of motivational strategies) lacked empirical evidence; they did not explore how the motivational strategies worked in the classrooms.

For the past decade, there have been published studies (Cheng & Dőrnyei, 2007; Dőrnyei & Csizér, 1998) that yielded empirical data on the usefulness of motivational strategies. Dőrnyei and Csizér (1998) examine Hungarian teachers of English ($N = 200$) from elementary schools to universities about the importance of 51 motivational strategies and the frequency of using these strategies in their teaching practice. The teachers reported ten most frequently used strategies for motivating language learners: 'setting a personal example with teachers' own behavior', 'creating a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere in the classroom', 'presenting the tasks properly', 'developing a good relationship with the learners', 'increasing the learners' linguistic self-confidence', 'making the language class interesting', 'promoting learner autonomy', 'personalizing the learning process', 'increasing the learners' goal-orientation', and 'familiarizing learners with the target language culture' (p. 215). Moving to an Asian context, inspired by Dőrnyei and Csizér's (1998) study, Cheng and Dőrnyei (2007) conduct a similar study on Taiwanese teachers of English ($N = 387$) from elementary schools, cram schools, private practice, vocational schools, and universities. Cheng and Dőrnyei (2007, p. 171) found that some motivational strategies were transferable across diverse cultural contexts. These transferable strategies include 'displaying motivating teacher behavior', 'promoting learners' self-confidence', 'creating a pleasant classroom climate', and 'presenting the tasks properly', while 'promoting learner autonomy' was perceived to not have motivational relevance by English teachers in Taiwan due to the Asian culture where teachers are used to teaching in a relatively controlling manner.

One limitation of these studies is that they depended mostly on teachers' self-reports about the frequency of using the strategies and their opinion on the importance of applying those strategies in classrooms. These studies failed to demonstrate the effect of the motivational

strategies on the students. Guilloteaux and Dőrnyei (2008) investigated the link between teachers' motivational strategies and students' motivation. In the study, Guilloteaux and Dőrnyei (2008) supplemented questionnaires with a motivation observation scheme and a post-lesson teacher evaluation scale. The use of quantitative instruments has the advantage of producing replicable data and results that can be assessed for statistical significance and hence the ability to generalize. What is missing in their study are qualitative elements of the study that can meaningfully complement the quantitative data. It is important to explore qualitative data in conjunction because they reflect 'the intricacies and complexities of individuals and the complex social nature of the event itself' (Atkinson, 2005, p. 53). Thus, in the present study, a combination of quantitative and qualitative designs which 'bring out the best of both approaches while neutralising the shortcomings and biases inherent in each paradigm' was used (Dőrnyei, 2001, p. 242).

Teachers' Motivational Practice and Student Motivation

A study in Hungary has found that 'the teacher's motivation has significant bearings on students' motivational disposition and, more generally, on their learning achievement' (Dőrnyei, 2003, p. 26). Guilloteaux and Dőrnyei (2008) conducted a theoretically grounded, evidence-based research that investigated teachers' motivational practice on student motivation. The research, conducted in South Korea, indicated that teachers' motivational practice has a positive impact on exhibited English-as-a-foreign-language student motivation in language classrooms. Guilloteaux and Dőrnyei (2008) define learners' motivated behavior as observation data on student behavior regarding the levels of their attention, engagement, and volunteering in class activities. Self-reported student motivation refers to data gathered from student questionnaires, in terms of information pertinent to student attitude and their self-confidence. The observation data were based on the researcher's objective judgment with respect to an observation scheme, while student questionnaires solicited subjective comments from students. In Guilloteaux and Dőrnyei's study, the findings show that teachers' motivational practice was found to be positively correlated with both students' motivated behavior and self-reported student motivation. This study aims to investigate specific strategies in teachers' motivational practice that have positive correlations with both students' motivated behavior and self-reported student motivation.

Methodology

The following question guided the current study:
What is the effect of writing instructors' motivational strategies on student motivation?

Participants

For this study, undergraduate students at a large public university in Singapore were recruited. The students were pre-service teachers who enrolled in an Academic Discourse Skills course, a compulsory writing course taken by all the first-year undergraduates. The course was conducted in English and students were required to write in English. The researcher conducted

the study in the second semester of the 2011-2012 academic year with 344 undergraduate students. The class size was about 19-22 students in each tutorial group (16 groups in total). All the student participants followed a teacher education programme, which leads to a four-year bachelor's degree with a strong pedagogical and content focus in an educational field. The student participants included 244 (71%) females and 100 (29%) males. 227 (66%) participants were Chinese, 89 (26%) were Malay, and 28 (8%) were Indian, aged between 18 and 40 years old.

Apart from using the student surveys, 13 classroom observations with 13 writing instructors were conducted. These instructors comprised a total of 10 (77%) females and 3 (23%) males, aged 34-59 years. Four (30%) participants were Indian, three (23%) were Singaporean Chinese, and the rest (47%) were from Canada, China, Korea, Malaysia, the United States, and Vietnam, respectively. Their teaching experience ranged from 2-30 years. Four writing instructors were PhD holders and nine had Master's degrees. Two months after the course was over, these writing instructors were invited to take part in the surveys. Within a week, 10 writing instructors responded, yielding a response rate of 71%.

Two weeks before the commencement of the course, all the writing instructors for the Academic Discourse Skills course, who were involved in the study, received a one-hour training by the researcher on the use of motivational strategies in writing classrooms. The strategies covered were based on Dőrnyei's (2001) motivational strategy framework for language classrooms. The researcher asked the writing instructors to apply some of the strategies throughout the semester to motivate their students in learning academic writing, and to refer the students to Dőrnyei's (2001) relevant book on motivational strategies.

Materials

Data were collected through classroom observation schemes, student surveys, and surveys with writing instructors. The classroom observation schemes collected quantitative data, while the student surveys and surveys with writing instructors gathered both quantitative and qualitative data. The research was completed in compliance with the recommendations and procedures of the institutional review board.

Motivation Orientation of Language Teaching Classroom Observation Scheme (MOLTCOS) combines Dőrnyei's (2001) model of motivational teaching practice and Spada and Frőhlich's (1995) classroom observation scheme (Guilloteaux & Dőrnyei, 2008). The MOLTCOS instrument, with modifications to suit the context of Singapore, gathered data about teachers' motivational practice and students' motivated behavior. The researcher selected 15 variables that were clearly observable using a real-time observation scheme where relevant classroom events were recorded every minute for 60 minutes. Table 1 shows the information pertaining to teachers' motivational strategies: (i) generating, maintaining, and protecting situation-specific task motivation, and (ii) encouraging positive and retrospective self-evaluation.

Teachers' motivational strategies	Examples
Generating, maintaining, and protecting situation-specific task motivation	Teacher discourse - referential question, promoting autonomy, promoting cooperation, scaffolding, arousing attention, promoting instrumental values and establishing relevance Participation structure - whether group work was being used Activity design - tangible task product and intellectual challenge
Encouraging positive retrospective self-evaluation	Effective praise Feedback session

Table 1: Teachers' motivational strategies

Students' motivated behavior was measured by "student attention (more than two thirds of the students showed strong evidence of it in my observation)," "behavioral engagement (more than two thirds of the students)," and "eager volunteering in class activities (more than one third of the students)". In total, 13 lesson observations of 13 writing instructors over three weeks starting from Week 8 were conducted. The topic of Week 8's lesson was about writing the introduction and methodology sections of a research paper. Week 9's lesson was about writing the findings, discussion, and conclusion sections of a research paper. Week 10's lesson concerned the interpersonal dimension of academic writing. These three weeks were chosen because the students found the materials taught at this time to be particularly useful to their academic paper writing tasks. These few weeks showed similar motivational background, so observations in different weeks were comparable. The researcher knew the topics and the teaching schedule in advance because it was a compulsory writing course offered every semester.

Survey with students (Appendix A) gathered data about students' attitude and their self-confidence toward the Academic Discourse Skills course. In Part 1, the participants were asked to rate on a scale 1 to 4 (1 = "strongly disagree" and 4 = "strongly agree") the extent to which they agreed that situation-specific motivational inclination related to the Academic Discourse Skills course. Part 2 consisted of open-ended questions. Participants were asked to give examples pertinent to their learning attitude and self-confidence. The previous study (Guilloteaux & Dőrnyei, 2008) reported quantitative data only with no qualitative information from sample students regarding their attitude and self-confidence in the course.

Survey with writing instructors (Appendix B) gathered data about writing instructors' response on their use of four macrostrategies, namely how they created basic motivational conditions (15 items), generated initial motivation (4 items), maintained and protected motivation (17 items), and conducted positive retrospective self-evaluation (2 items). The survey questions was adapted from Dőrnyei (2001). The writing instructors were asked to rate on a scale 1 to 4 (1 = "strongly disagree" and 4 = "strongly agree") the extent to which they agreed with the given items. There was a column next to the items to allow the writing instructors to write down personal examples or thoughts pertinent to the four macrostrategies.

Data Analysis

The data for this study consisted of three types: (i) quantitative data from the close-ended questions in the student surveys and teacher surveys, (ii) qualitative data from the open-ended questions in the student surveys and teacher surveys, and (iii) the classroom observation data.

The research focused on how writing instructors' motivational strategies can affect student motivation, student attitude and self-confidence in class. The goal was to analyze the quantitative data about this aspect for correlations.

The quantitative, Likert-scale data were coded on a 4-point scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree) with increments of one in between; missing responses were coded as zeros. All data were entered into SPSS 20. Negatively worded items in the student surveys (4, 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17) were recorded positively before analysis. Then, to form a composite measure of the student survey data, the standardized scores (z-scores) were computed. Following this, all the standardized scores were summed up. It is important to sum up the standardized scores because 'the resulting z-scores express how much each raw value is different from the group mean, and by equalizing the means, scores obtained from different sources are readily comparable' (Dőrnyei, 2007, p. 205). The researcher labeled the composite scores the students' motivated behavior data gathered from the surveys.

The qualitative data were analyzed through an inductive approach, in which patterns and themes emerged from the data. After all the data were entered into NVivo, the researcher read the data segments (a segment is a single response by a respondent to one question in the survey), and coded each of them as referring to a specific macrostrategy in Dőrnyei's (2001) motivational strategy framework. She then re-read the entire corpus and compiled a list of general themes. She further refined the list of general themes through a coding process by grouping related themes and by renaming combined categories.

The observational data were analyzed as follows. For each component on the observation sheets, the researcher first added up, for each column, the number of minutes during which a specific activity or behavior had taken place. Then, she entered these totals, which ranged from 0-60, into an SPSS data file. Next, she worked out the composite scores in order to compute measures of the students' motivated behavior and the teachers' motivational practice (from the classroom observation data). Similar to the quantitative data analysis mentioned above, the standardized scores (z-scores) were computed, and all the standardized scores were summed up to get the composite scores.

Reliability analyses for the instruments are shown as follows. The questionnaire items constituting two scales (9 items measuring students' attitudes toward the Academic Discourse Skills course and 8 items measuring student self-confidence) were analyzed, with reliability alphas being 0.79 and 0.76 respectively. Results of the factor analysis with the eigenvalue greater than 1 explained 50% of the total variance. The classroom observation data measured two variables: student motivated behavior (3 items) and teacher motivational practice (12 items) with reliability alphas 0.61[1] and 0.88 respectively. The close-ended questions in the teacher surveys indicated good internal consistency and reliability, with Cronbach alpha being 0.80.

Results
Effects of Writing Instructors' Motivational Strategies on Student Motivation

In order to examine the relationships between writing instructors' strategies in generating initial motivation and students' attitude and self-confidence, Pearson correlation coefficients were employed, based on data from the students' questionnaire and the close-ended questions in

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[1] These low scoring measures were used because they gave important information on the students' levels of engagement in the classrooms, in terms of the proportion of students who actively participated in class or paid attention, and who volunteered during classroom activities.

the writing instructors' surveys. The writing instructors' strategies in generating initial motivation subscale and students' attitude and self-confidence subscales were significantly and positively correlated ($r = 0.75$, $p < 0.05$). This finding indicates that the more the writing instructors reported using strategies in generating students' initial motivation in the classroom, the more the students reported having positive attitude and improved self-confidence in the Academic Discourse Skills course (see Table 2).

The linear regression suggests that instructors' strategies in generating initial motivation can statistically predict students' attitude and self-confidence, $F (1, 8) = 11.45$, $p < .05$. Instructors' strategies in generating initial motivation accounted for 53.7% of the explained variability in students' attitude and self-confidence (see Table 3).

		TQ2	SQO
TQ2	Pearson Correlation	1	.751*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.012
	N	10	10
SQO	Pearson Correlation	.751*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.012	
	N	10	344

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 2: Pearson correlations: instructors' strategies in generating initial motivation to students' attitude and self-confidence

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.767[a]	.589	.537	3.43536	2.331

a. Predictors: (Constant), Average_TGM
b. Dependent Variable: Average_SA

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	135.186	1	135.186	11.455	.010[b]
	Residual	94.414	8	11.802		
	Total	229.600	9			

a. Dependent Variable: Average_SA
b. Predictors: (Constant), Average_TGM

Table 3: Linear regression analysis to predict students' attitude and self-confidence

A correlation between the writing instructors' motivational practice and the students' motivated behavior emerged based on the classroom observation data ($r = 0.57$, $p < 0.05$). This finding suggests that the more the writing instructors give praise, feedback, and challenging group work, or ask referential questions, or promote autonomy and instrumental value and establish relevance, the more the students pay attention in class, engage in class activities, and volunteer to answer questions in class. The above-mentioned results reflect certain effects of the writing instructors' motivational strategies on student motivation (see Tables 4 and 5).

		TB	LMBO
TB	Pearson Correlation	1	.574[*]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.040
	N	13	13
LMBO	Pearson Correlation	.574[*]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.040	
	N	13	13

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 4: Pearson correlations: writing instructors' motivational practice to students' motivated behavior

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1.378	1	1.378	.279	.611[b]
	Residual	39.451	8	4.931		
	Total	40.830	9			

a. Dependent Variable: SMB_Zscore_Sum
b. Predictors: (Constant), TMB_Zscore_SUM

Table 5: Linear regression analysis to predict students' motivated behavior

The instructors 'created the basic motivational conditions' (Dőrnyei, 2001, p. 31) through their careful teaching preparation, their clear instructions on the tutorial tasks, and their careful planning in creating opportunities for students to help each other in the group activities. These teacher practices did have a motivational effect on students. For example, one student commented, 'The instructor explained clearly what needs to be done. Our instructor would do a few examples before we try out on a group level. For the task, we discuss extracts/sample texts as a group and present our discussion to the class'. Another student explained, 'It is helpful that we work in groups and have extensive discussions, with the instructor always giving examples on how things can be done, before asking us to attempt the tasks. Given the fact that exercise in class is done in groups, I can always consult my friends if I am unclear about certain aspects'. A more generally held view is characterized by the remarks of another student who found group work useful to those who were slow in learning. This was because 'I get some help from my teammates during group work since I am quite slow in picking up certain topics'. A number of students admitted that they turned to their group mates for help when they were in doubt, 'There were instances whereby I don't understand, my group mates are there to help'.

The writing instructors 'generated students' initial motivation' (Dőrnyei, 2001, p. 50) by highlighting the intrinsic value and the instrumental value of learning academic writing skills to the students. Also, writing instructors told students that they would be able to apply the writing skills in future courses having research papers as part of the assessment criteria. This teacher practice had motivational effect on students, since many students expressed intrinsic interest in taking the course. A student commented that learning new things that he did not know brought about a positive feeling. 'I learned new things about writing which I was unaware of'. It was suggested that the students viewed their writing instructors as a contributing factor in building their positive attitude in classroom learning. One student commented, 'I like the content

knowledge and the way the instructor conducted the class'. Another student commented, 'I have learned a lot of new things related to writing in this course, thanks to my tutor who provides a hands-on session in all lessons and makes the lesson interesting and meaningful to us'. Other students discussed the instrumental value of 'learning useful academic writing skills which I can apply in other courses' and perceived the academic discourse skills course as helpful to their writing assignments in future courses. The students were of the opinion that the academic writing skills that they had acquired would help them write research papers for other courses in the semester.

The writing instructors 'maintained and protected student motivation' (Dőrnyei, 2001, p. 71) by including group discussions and hands-on activities in every class. The constructivist approach to teaching had a motivational effect on students (Nie & Lau, 2010). For example, the student participants pointed to the hands-on nature of the course. 'The course was not boring. The exercises we did in class with hands-on activities tested our understanding of the concepts that we learned'. Another student wrote, 'I like the way we are grouped together and time is given for discussions and hands-on'. Another student commented 'I like the group discussions. We get to share our thoughts and learn from my group members on the different aspects of academic writing'. The students who enjoyed group work found the discussions interesting and engaging. 'I enjoyed the group discussions as they were fun and engaging'. It also emerged that the students felt that the writing instructors made sure that the activities would involve the participation of all the students. The students reported that 'The instructor involved the students through group activities that ensure continuous student participation and engagement'.

The writing instructors 'encouraged positive retrospective self-evaluation' (Dőrnyei, 2001, p. 117) by providing motivational feedback and confidence-building experiences for students. This teacher practice had motivational effect on students as the confidence-building provided students with experiences of success when taking the Academic Discourse Skills course. Experiencing success was described by the students as receiving good grades and positive feedback from the writing instructors. Typical comments included, 'When my instructor returned my first assignment and gave constructive feedback and a good grade for it, I felt confident and wanted to achieve the same grade for the other assignments'. Another way of building students' confidence in academic writing was the application of the skills they had learned in class to research paper writing and classroom discussions. One student said, 'The success comes when I am able to apply what I have learned in the course to writing my research paper. Besides, I experienced success when I was able to internalize the readings and apply the concepts to answer questions that were asked in class.' Additionally, encouragements by the writing instructors seemed to increase the students' confidence in academic writing. Another student said, 'When my instructor encourages me and reaffirms that I am on the right track, this boosts my confidence'.

In the student surveys, however, the majority of the students mentioned that they did not find the long hours of the lessons (three hours per week) motivating. One student said 'I really didn't like it that the class was 3-hour long. It was actually very draining to have to sit in the same class for 3 hours straight. Though we do get breaks I still think the duration of the class is too long.' Other students reported that they did not find writing weekly in-class reflections motivating. One student mentioned 'I did not like writing the reflections as I felt it's not truly reflective of what we've received throughout the lesson. Even though it forces us to listen carefully in class, not everything would be able to be absorbed within one lesson. Sometimes, we need to go back home to think about what was taught before truly knowing what we've learned.'

When asked to give suggestions about what instructors could do to enhance students' motivation in doing academic writing, a student said '… reduce the face-to-face duration of the course. Allow students to experiment more about their own writing… Remove in-class reflections. It was a stressed piece of work every week. It becomes a chore after a few times.'

Two students described the importance of intrinsic motivation from students themselves when asked what instructors could do to enhance students' motivation in doing academic writing. One student mentioned 'I think it has to be an intrinsic motivation where students recognise that this is more than just completing a compulsory module but a skill that will be useful for other courses and future writings… I believe it's something that needs to come from the student themselves seeing the need to acquire the skill. Intrinsic motivation needs to start from students recognizing the need for the skills and then wanting to learn it to self-improve.' Another student reported 'I think the best form of motivation comes within us. The instructors can try to engage the students in class discussion because I believe one learns best when one is happy in class and laughing during class discussions. Also, the students need to be told why they are taking the course and how it will benefit them in the future so that they will understand that it is not just another course that they have to slog through that semester but it is a course that will really help them in their respective academic journey.'

Discussion

Current findings in the literature align with my study results regarding the use of motivational strategies in teaching as promoting students' positive attitude in learning (Cheng & Dőrnyei, 2007; Guilloteaux, 2007; Guilloteaux & Dőrnyei, 2008). The findings can be explained using Dőrnyei's (2001) motivational strategy framework, a theory-based approach suggesting that student motivation is related to instructors' motivational practice, in particular, in creating, generating and maintaining student motivation, as well as encouraging positive retrospective self-evaluation. This study has strengthened empirical evidence and significantly added to current research that the writing instructors' use of motivational strategies may enhance student motivation in demonstrating it in the context of Singapore teacher education.

As demonstrated in the regression analysis, the impact of instructors' motivational strategies on student motivation is non-significant. This may be attributed to the characteristics of the student population. Student participants were not homogeneous; they were from different disciplines, writing for different specializations. Besides, instructors could differ in the way in which they tried to motivate students to learn academic writing and their motivational strategies could vary. It seems very unlikely that all instructors motivated students in exactly the same ways. For future research, qualitative studies (for example, case studies) might reconcile the discrepant findings to shed more light on the topic.

Much research in the area of teachers' motivational strategies has relied on teachers' self-reports about the frequency of using the strategies and their opinions on the importance of applying these strategies in classrooms. Little attention has been given to the relationship between teacher motivational practice and student motivation (Alison & Halliwell, 2002; Brophy, 2004; Dőrnyei, 2006). The findings of this study add to current literature that the instructors' motivational strategies can impact the students in the writing classrooms. The findings give teachers insights into an instructional practice geared towards making classroom learning fruitful for students. In particular, scholars (Guilloteaux & Dőrnyei, 2008) in the field

suggest that the relation between teacher motivational practice and student motivation, and teachers' beliefs about the motivational strategies may influence the writing instructors' future classroom practices. In order to motivate the students in the class, inexperienced writing instructors may find it useful to learn classroom motivational teaching practice, perhaps by attending training and professional development workshops or reading literature on motivational strategies in the classroom. Indeed, both students and writing instructors are responsible for contributing to a conducive learning experience. This is to say, adult, tertiary students should have both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in learning; instructors should possess adequate pedagogical knowledge to initiate and sustain student interest in the class.

The last few decades have seen studies of student demotivation in different parts of the world (e.g., Gorham & Christophel, 1992, for U.S. study; Trang & Baldauf, 2007, for Vietnam study). A common point raised by researchers in these studies is that the teacher's role may be a source of student demotivation. Findings from this study have important implications not only for understanding the impacts of motivational strategies on students, such as ways of increasing their expectancy of success and self-confidence and establishing their positive attitude towards the course. It is worth pointing out that most research studies have shown that teachers use motivational strategies in the classrooms because they believe that the strategies can help enhance student motivation in English language learning. This study provided quantitative empirical evidence supporting this belief, i.e. teachers' motivational practice matters as indicated by the significant positive correlation between the teacher and student measures (Cheng & Dőrnyei, 2007; Guilloteaux & Dőrnyei, 2008; Schiefele & Schaffner, 2015).

Faculty members in charge of writing programs could benefit from the findings of this study in structuring their training methods. Writing program coordinators may take note of the theory-based motivational teaching framework so that they can equip budding instructors with sound motivational strategies. Introducing novice writing instructors to various motivational strategies may help alleviate the immediate problem of student demotivation in a course on the one hand, and nurture students with valuable abilities to accomplish long-term goals on the other (Guilloteaux & Dőrnyei, 2008). Many writing programs and teacher education programs may neglect teaching these strategies under the belief that motivational strategies are innate abilities that do not need to be taught. The program coordinators may think that instructors can learn motivational strategies solely from experienced colleagues, or simply by imitating their favorite lecturers in college. They may also be unaware of the complexity and subtlety of certain motivational strategies when applied to teaching academic writing. As regards the writing instructors, they may underestimate the challenge of student demotivation and do not know that they could play a contributing role to student demotivation. To inform a motivation-sensitive teaching practice, more research studies will be needed to investigate the potential benefits of teaching motivational strategies explicitly to writing instructors in order to maximize students' potential for learning.

Conclusion

Drawing on Dőrnyei's motivational strategy framework, writing instructors' use of motivational strategies has an impact on student motivation. The overall findings in this study context indicate that the more the writing instructors reported using strategies in generating students' initial motivation in the classroom, the more the students reported having a positive

attitude and improved self-confidence in the writing course. Existing evidence-based research is scarce that investigates the relationship of instructors' motivational strategies and student motivation in learning. The current study significantly contributes to this important but largely neglected approach for the subject problem, but also complements the quantitative results by qualitative evidence.

The combined quantitative and qualitative approach has rarely been undertaken in the investigation of the issues that this particular study explores. Despite its multi-faceted nature, this effort has limitations. First, this motivation project was conducted at one public university, among all first-year undergraduates who were pre-service teachers. The conclusions drawn may not be immediately generalizable to other student populations. Further research targeted at other institutions of higher learning, for students in different stages of their studies will advance our understanding of student motivation in learning academic writing broadly. Another limitation is that the set of writing instructors' motivation strategies focused in the classroom observations was not complete. Certain interesting motivational strategies could not be included because of different constraints, such as the availability of only one non-participant observer, busy teaching and administrative schedules of the observer, and the absence of video recording during the observations. More comprehensive future research studies can use multiple observers to observe the instructors multiple times assisted by video recording, and might uncover further valuable insights into nuances of the writing instructors' motivational behaviors. Third, the student participants in this study completed their surveys with pen-and-paper. This might have negatively impacted the quality of response by students who prefer the use of computers and word processors in writing. In the future, students could be given a choice of instruments they prefer when filling out the surveys. In particular, computer-assisted writing research suggests that certain students tend to write more when composing on computers rather than using a traditional pen-and-paper mode. A novel instrument, such as the Motometer, may be adopted by the students to record their motivation at different moments in the classroom (Waninge, Dörnyei, & de Bot, 2014).

Despite the limitations noted above, the current study advances our understanding of the relations between instructors' motivational strategies and student motivated behaviors in a writing course. At the theoretical level, this study complements previous studies that examine motivational teaching practice (Dőrnyei, 2001) in language classrooms including second language writing classrooms. Particularly, it contributes to understanding motivational strategies in generating, maintaining, and protecting students' motivation. As this study has demonstrated, the motivational strategies contribute to students' positive attitude in learning, increase their attention and engagement in the course, give them the feeling of success in written assignments, and enhance their self-confidence.

At the pedagogical level, findings of the study provide further empirical evidence of the usefulness of teachers' motivational strategies. Specifically, writing instructors can make use of the motivational strategies to generate students' initial motivation by creating a supportive classroom atmosphere. Effective use of the motivational strategies may help alleviate the problem of student demotivation in their learning process, given that instructors may play a role in student demotivation. Another pedagogical implication of the study is the relevance of motivational strategies in the teaching of writing in higher education. Most previous research, if not all, has focused on primary and secondary schools rather than universities. Findings of the present study demonstrate that motivational strategies can be an important pedagogical tool in the teaching and learning of academic writing in higher education as well, because the strategies

clearly boosted students' self-confidence in taking a compulsory academic writing course and enabled pre-service teachers to feel success at different stages of the writing course. Findings of the present study also show that students felt that writing instructors' motivational strategies contributed to their positive attitude and learning experience. These teacher practices, with some adjustments, may scale up to larger class sizes commonly found in higher education. This study has wide relevance because of its applicability beyond language learning and its applicability in bigger classes.

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Acknowledgements

Appendix A - Survey Questions to Students (Adapted from Guilloteaux and Dőrnyei, 2008, with modifications)

Part 1   Rate on a scale 1 to 4 (1 = "strongly disagree" and 4 = "strongly agree")

Students' attitude toward the Academic Discourse Skills course was measured by nine items:

- I wish I had the ALS101 Academic Discourse Skills classes at NIE in the 1st semester of the first year of undergraduate study.
- I like the ALS101 Academic Discourse Skills classes this semester.
- The ALS101 Academic Discourse Skills is one of my favorite subjects at NIE this semester.
- When the ALS101 Academic Discourse Skills class ends, I often wish it could continue.
- I want to work hard in the ALS101 Academic Discourse Skills to make myself happy.
- I enjoy my ALS101 Academic Discourse Skills classes this semester because my tutor pitches her teaching at the right level.
- In the ALS101 Academic Discourse Skills this semester, we are learning important academic writing skills that will be useful in the future.
- I would rather spend time on subjects other than the ALS101 Academic Discourse Skills.
- Learning the ALS101 Academic Discourse Skills is a burden for me this semester.

Students' linguistic self-confidence was measured by eight items:

- I wish I had the ALS101 Academic Discourse Skills classes at NIE in the 1st semester of the first year of undergraduate study.
- I believe I will receive good grade in the ALS 101 Academic Discourse Skills this semester.
- I often experience a feeling of success in my ALS101 Academic Discourse Skills classes.
- I am sure that one day I will be able to write a good academic paper.
- In the ALS101 Academic Discourse Skills, I usually understand what to do and how to do it.
- I am worried about my ability to do well in the ALS101 Academic Discourse Skills final paper.
- I get very worried if I make mistakes during the ALS101 Academic Discourse Skills classes.
- I feel more nervous in the ALS101 Academic Discourse Skills than in my other classes.

Part 2   Open-ended questions

Learning attitude

- Did you enjoy the Academic Discourse Skills course?
- Which aspects did you like/dislike?

Self-confidence

- Have you experienced any feeling of success in the Academic Discourse Skills course? Explain with examples.
- Were you making progress in learning academic writing skills? Explain with examples.

- Did you usually understand what to do and how to do the class exercises and assignments? Explain with examples.

Other

- What can the instructors do to enhance students' motivation in doing academic writing?

Appendix B - Survey Questions to Writing Instructors (Dőrnyei, 2001, pp. 137-144, with modifications)

[SD = strongly disagree; D = disagree; A = agree; SA = strongly agree]

Your belief about the motivational teaching practice	Put a tick at the right box			
	Example/Remarks	SD	D	A	SA
Share your own personal interest in academic writing with your students.					
Show students that you value learning of academic writing skills as meaningful experience that produces satisfaction and enriches your life.					
Show students that you care about their progress.					
Have sufficiently high expectations for what your students can achieve.					
Show students that you accept and care about them.					
Pay attention and listen to each of them.					
Establish a norm of tolerance.					
Encourage risk-taking and have mistakes accepted as a natural part of learning.					
Bring in and encourage humour.					
Try and promote interaction, cooperation and the sharing of genuine personal information among the learners.					
Use ice-breakers at the beginning of a course.					
Regularly use small-group tasks where students can mix.					
Try and prevent the emergence of rigid seating patterns.					
Include activities that lead to the successful completion of whole-group tasks or involve small-group competition games.					
Include a specific "group rules" activity at the beginning of a group's life to establish the norms explicitly.					

Regularly remind students that the successful mastery of academic writing skills is instrumental to the accomplishment of their valued goals.					
Make sure that students receive sufficient preparation and assistance.					
Make sure students know exactly what success in the task involves.					
Draw attention from time to time to the class goals and how particular activities help to attain them.					
Positively confront the possible erroneous beliefs, expectations, and assumptions that students may have.					
Vary the learning tasks and other aspects of your teaching as much as you can.					
Occasionally do the unexpected.					
Make tasks challenging.					
Make task content attractive by adapting it to the students' natural interest or by including novel, intriguing, humorous or competitive elements.					
Explain the purpose and utility of a task.					
Provide appropriate strategies to carry out the task.					
Encourage learners to select specific, short-term goals for themselves.					
Provide multiple opportunities for success in the ALS101 class.					
Draw your students' attention to their strengths and abilities.					
Indicate to your students that you believe in their effort to learn and their capability to complete the tasks.					
Help students accept the fact that they will make mistakes as part of the learning process.					
Avoid fact-threatening acts such as humiliating criticism or putting students in the spotlight unexpectedly.					
Adopt the role of a facilitator.					
Raise your students' awareness of the importance of self-motivation.					
Share with each other strategies that you have found useful in the past.					
Encourage students to adopt, develop and apply self-motivating strategies.					

Notice and react to any positive contributions from your students.					
Provide regular feedback about the progress your students are making and about the areas with they should particularly concentrate on.					
Make sure that grades also reflect effort and improvement and not just objective levels of achievement.					