An Investigation into the Impact of Dialogue Journal Writing on the Writing Motivation of EFL Freshman Students in Ethiopia

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Abstract: Dialogue journal writing is extensively regarded as an effective technique for enhancing the writing motivation of EFL/ESL students. However, studies on how dialogue journal writing enhances EFL students' writing motivation are scarce in the Ethiopian context. This study investigates the impact of dialogue journal writing on freshman EFL students' writing motivation. Employing a quasi-experimental design, two intact groups were selected from students in the social science stream. After checking their comparability at the onset of the intervention, the two groups were randomly assigned into experimental (n = 37) and comparison groups (n = 35) using coin flipping. Following this, the experimental group was instructed writing for 10 weeks based on the dialogue journal writing approach and the comparison group for the same period, but following the conventional approach. Data were collected before and after the intervention through a writing motivation questionnaire from both groups. The collected data were analyzed using an independent sample t-test, a paired sample t-test, and one-way MANOVA. The result of the study revealed that dialogue journal writing significantly enhanced the experimental group students' overall writing motivation ($p<0.05$), with a large effect size (d = 1.46), and its sub-components (enjoyment, self-efficacy, instrumentality, recognition, and effort), ($p<0.05$), with a moderate effect size ($\eta^2p = 0.371$) when these sub-components were considered combined. The finding suggests that dialogue journal writing can effectively enhance EFL students' writing motivation. Therefore, university EFL teachers are recommended to use dialogue journal writing in their writing classes to improve their students' writing motivation.

Keywords: Dialogue Journals, Writing Motivation, Enjoyment, Self-efficacy, Instrumentality, Recognition, Effort.

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Introduction

In Ethiopia, English is taught as a foreign language from grade one onwards and is used as a medium of instruction in secondary schools, colleges, and higher education institutions (Mebratu, 2022). Of the four language skills, the two literacy skills (writing and reading) are emphasized at secondary levels in Ethiopia with the aim of preparing learners for higher education (MoE, 2009), as competence in these skills determines learners' academic success or failure (Mebratu, 2022). Though these skills are emphasized at this level, local studies (Abiy, 2013; Dawit,2014; Deti et al., 2023; Zeleke, 2017) and the researchers' observations revealed that the writing performance of many students in Ethiopian higher education institutions is below the expected level. This could be attributed to the methods used to teach writing (Dawit, 2014; Hassen et al., 2024). Besides, motivation, attitude and teaching material used also contribute (Deti et al., 2023). This calls for employing innovative techniques to overcome these students' challenges.

Writing is one of the vital skills for students' success at various levels, mainly at college or university and in their future endeavors. Its role is emphasized at higher education institutions where students are required to carry out various writing-related tasks (Wondim et al., 2023) compared to lower levels. It also plays an essential role in supplementing language teaching and learning (Deti et al., 2023; Pratiwi et al., 2022). Hyland (2003) adds that the learners' writing improvement determines language development. This suggests that good writing proficiency is essential for developing language skills, for academic success, and for preparing oneself for future careers. Besides, Yang (2024), underlined that writing can be time-consuming and discouraging without effective skills. Hence, learners need adequate knowledge and skill in choosing writing prompts or topics, generating ideas, organizing, drafting, editing, and producing a readable text to effectively communicate their thoughts, feelings, ideas, etc., to readers. This demands learners develop their writing skills. Despite this demand, teaching writing in EFL contexts remains challenging, with limited studies on effective techniques to enhance student motivation which is one of the determining factors for writing performance.

On the contrary, writing is considered the most challenging skill for EFL/ESL learners of various levels (Alsaleem, 2013). This is because learners are required to use various writing sub-skills and aspects such as language structure, word choice, idea development, and so on (Alzubi & Nazim, 2024). Yang (2024) stressed that effective writing requires negotiating interconnected rhetorical and textual components including word choice,

grammar, and structure. These challenges could be associated with a lack of writing motivation which hinders learners from engaging in writing.

There could be several factors that cause writing to be complicated. Motivation is one of these major factors that determine the success or failure of a task (Brown, 2000) or second language learning in general (Hashemian & Heidari, 2013; Richards & Schmidt, 2010) and writing in particular (Ackerman, 2006; Aryanika, 2016; Süğümlü et al., 2019). Motivation is considered one of the affective factors determining the foreign language learning process (Jodai et al., 2013) and contributing to writing difficulties (Pajares, 1996; Pratiwi et al., 2022). According to Du (2009), some L2 students perform poorly due to a lack of motivation. Kulusakli (2021) further stressed that learners' educational success depends on their writing motivation. This highlights the role of motivation for learners' academic success in general and writing performance in particular.

Evidently, highly motivated students demonstrate keenness and active engagement in writing (Pratiwi et al., 2022). On the contrary, if students have low motivation to write, there is a possibility that they will either produce poor text or be unable to write at all. According to Altınmakas and Bayyurt (2019), low motivation negatively impacts the learning process of writing. Aryanika (2016) adds that students' proficiency declines when their motivation decreases. In this regard, Jodai et al. (2013) confirmed motivation as the most predictor of English achievement in their study. They added that there is a 'reciprocal cause-effect relationship' between motivation and L2 achievement and between writing performance and motivation (Alzubi & Nazim, 2024). Correlational research conducted by Süğümlü et al. (2019) on 230 secondary school students in Turkey revealed that students with high motivation had high scores in writing. This implies that high motivation enhances writing achievement, whilst low motivation leads to poor performance. Motivation plays a vital role in EFL instruction in general and writing in particular, but it has been considered the 'neglected' area of language instruction (Rost, 2006). Rost further explained that our success as teachers is determined by the approaches (techniques) we employ to motivate learners, as the class feels lifeless (Rost, 2006). This suggests the implementation of an innovative technique that improves EFL students' writing motivation.

One of these techniques could be employing dialogue journal writing (DJW) in writing instruction. According to Holmes and Moulton (1995), despite DJW being regarded as an essential technique, few studies have examined its effects from the viewpoint of higher education students. This emphasizes the indispensable role of DJW in the EFL classroom context. DJW is a regular written interaction between a student and teacher on topics that

interest both for a particular time, focusing on communication and meaning (Peyton, 1990). Many researchers (Holmes & Moulton, 1997; Peyton & Reed, 1990) confirm that using DJW in writing instruction motivates learners to write more. However, the researchers could not come across similar studies that address the efficacy of dialogue journal writing on students' writing motivation in the Ethiopian context.

Therefore, this study aimed to address the following two research questions:

1) To what extent does DJW boost students' overall writing motivation?

2) How does implementing DJW improve students' motivation in terms of enjoyment, self-efficacy, instrumentality, recognition, and effort?

Literature Review

Writing Skill

Writing proficiency is the most essential language skill for students in higher education institutions (Liu, 2023) in the EFL context. It plays a vital role in conveying our ideas, feelings, thoughts, experiences, etc., to the known or unknown reader. Students, as writers, need to have content knowledge of the subject being written, appropriate vocabulary, the ability to organize and structure ideas in a grammatically correct manner, and the knowledge of mechanics to convey their ideas in writing. This means that expressing our ideas in writing with a certain level of coherence and accuracy is considered the main success (Aryanika, 2016). According to the author, mastering this skill is not simple, let alone for EFL/ESL learners, even native learners. In this regard, Widiati and Cahyono (2016) underlined that learners understand the purpose of writing and are aware of their audience. They should also have a purpose for writing (Harmer, 2004).

This claim aligns with the principle of DJW, which focuses on meaning instead of form and allows learners to write to the known audience, the teacher. In this regard, Harmer (2004) underlined that effective learning of writing takes place either when learners write real messages to a real audience or do any real-life related writing tasks. This suggests that the ESL/EFL writing classroom should be conducive, less threatening, and focused on communication. Harmer (2004) further stressed that motivating and provoking the students to have ideas for writing and energizing them with the value of a particular writing task could be considered the teacher's primary role in enabling learners to become better writers.

Writing Motivation

According to the theory of affective filter hypothesis, motivation, attitude, anxiety, and self-confidence are the major affective factors in SLA. Motivation is considered one of the most crucial factors in second language learning (Du, 2009). Samad et al. (2012) underline that motivation is vital to mastering a second/foreign language. Scholars classify motivation into intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation, which comes from internal derives, mainly focuses on engaging in a particular task for one's own sake. Similarly, from the perspective of learning a target language, Nourinezhad et al. (2017) describe intrinsic motivation as the inner factor that facilitates the process of language learning. On the other hand, extrinsic motivation focuses on engaging in a particular task for external rewards, such as getting a prize instead of personal satisfaction (Nourinezhad et al., 2017), passing examinations, studying abroad, travelling, or getting promoted (Du, 2009).

Still, other scholars (Gardner, 1978; Samad et al., 2012) categorize motivation into integrative and instrumental. In integrative motivation, learning a target language is not only to benefit from it but also to be immersed in the language, culture, and community. In contrast, from the perspective of instrumental motivation, the ultimate goal of language learning is to achieve external benefits such as getting a good job and a better salary (Gardner, 1978).

Though the degree varies depending on an individual's purpose for learning the target language, both motivation types (intrinsic/integrative and extrinsic/instrumental) determine the learning process. According to Wisnuwardhani (2022), learners hardly succeed in learning English without instrumental and integrative motivation. This implies that learners must be motivated intrinsically and extrinsically to learn the target language successfully (Jusoh & Ismail, 2020), regardless of their purpose. In this regard, Samad et al. (2012) found a positive correlation between integrative motivation and learning a foreign language in their study. On the other hand, their study concludes that there is no significant positive correlation between instrumental motivation and learning a foreign language.

More recently, Kulusakli (2021) claims that intrinsic motivation consists of the 'enjoyment' of learning a target language without any external obligation. As to O'Rourke and Zhou (2018), students with low English proficiency not only lose confidence but also develop low motivation which contributes to language acquisition in general and writing in particular. The other component of motivation to write is self-efficacy, which focuses on one's self-assessment of his or her own ability to attempt a certain task (Troia et al., 2012). In writing, self-efficacy focuses on a student's belief or confidence in his/her abilities to

perform a writing task or composition. Students with high self-efficacy may engage in a writing task enthusiastically. It is mainly related to 'confidence', which is one of the key components that enhance learners' success in learning or assessing a particular task (Muho & Kurani, 2013). Instrumentality is another element of motivation that affects learning the target language. According to Fazel and Ahmadi (2011), instrumental motivation occurs when learners aim to achieve a specific goal, including securing employment, developing professionally and preparing for exams through a second language. Effort is another component of motivation that mainly focuses on the attempts the students employ to learn. They put in more effort when they get motivated and even become committed to engaging in challenging tasks they may face while learning (Muho & Kurani, 2013). In short, Kulusakli (2021) categorizes 'enjoyment' under intrinsic motivation, whereas recognition and instrumentality under extrinsic motivation. Similarly, Surastina and Dedi (2018) claim that 'enjoyment' and 'self-efficacy' refer to intrinsic motivation, and 'instrumentality' and 'recognition' refer to learners' extrinsic motivation.

Hence, if learners are motivated (intrinsically/extrinsically) in EFL writing, they consistently write more. They work to become successful in writing, enabling them to attend their courses and become successful in the future. Moreover, motivated learners become eager to do various writing tasks enthusiastically. In Sukanaya et al.'s (2021) study, students claimed that their teacher's suggestions and input during DJW highly motivated them to improve their writing.

Liu (2023) added that EFL teachers should employ various presentation methods in the teaching process to enhance learners' writing motivation. Hence, writing motivation, one of the determining factors for the success or failure of their writing performance should be enhanced through appropriate techniques. One of these techniques could be DJW (Mehrdad, 2008), which is vital in boosting learners to write more.

Dialogue Journal Writing (DJW)

Dialogue journal writing refers to a regular written interaction between students and teachers to practice various aspects of the target language (Ravari & Rad, 2021). It can be adaptable to any level or age group (Bolton, 2013) and is considered a 'theoretically rich' and feasible technique (Hatta, 2018) which plays a vital role in the area of teaching writing (Pham et al., 2022). The interaction between the writing partners (student and teacher) focuses mainly on communication and meaning. Apart from enhancing writing, DJW is vital in improving students' learning, boosting their motivation, and developing critical thinking and reflection

(Routman, 2000, cited in Dieringer, 2006). It also has a positive effect on students learning and affective factors, including motivation (Liao & Wong, 2010). According to a qualitative study by Holmes and Moulton (1997), DJW enhances students' writing motivation. To confirm this, the participants used words including 'no scare', 'feel good', 'like to write more', 'feel free', and 'excited'. One of the students in their study stressed that DJW boosted her motivation to write. The leading cause of this is the absence of error correction and grading. This implies that EFL teachers use DJW in their classroom instruction to develop their students' writing motivation, which benefits writing performance. Besides, Carolina and Zabala (2021) underlined that dialogue journal writing enhanced fluency, and boosted motivation as well as reflection. Hence, employing DJW as a learning tool in writing classes could play a vital role in boosting learners' motivation.

Research Method

Design

The primary purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of DJW on students' writing motivation. To this end, the study employed a quasi-experimental, nonequivalent pre- and post-control group design.

Participants

The study participants were freshman students of Hawassa University selected using a multistage sampling technique. First, social science was chosen randomly among the three (natural, science, social science, and pre-engineering) streams. Then, two classes each consisting of two groups, were selected. Finally, from the two classes (four groups), the researchers selected two intact groups and randomly assigned them to experimental (n = 37) and comparison (n = 35) groups after checking their comparability before the intervention. Hence, a total of 72 students participated in this study.

Instrument

Data for this study was gathered through a five-point Likert scale writing motivation questionnaire, originally developed in English by Payne (2012). The original English questionnaire was adapted and used in this study. The questionnaire initially had 37 items, but the researchers adapted 31 items: 13 items on enjoyment, 7 items on self-efficacy, 4 items on instrumentality, 4 items on recognition, and 3 items on effort, considering their relevance to the current research. The wording of some items was slightly revised based on two TEFL

experts' comments to suit the current study. Besides, the items' scale ranged from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

The questionnaire has 0.95 Cronbach alpha and 'good content validity' (Payne, 2012). After slightly modifying, the questionnaire was administered to the experimental group (n = 37) and comparison group (n = 35) before and after the intervention. The researchers then entered the data into the SPSS version 26 and reverse-coded the negatively worded items. Following this, its reliability was checked using Cronbach's alpha, which was found to be 0.846 and 0.878 in the pre- and post-intervention phases, respectively, based on the same study participants both before and after the intervention. The pre-intervention questionnaire aimed to measure the participants' writing motivation, whereas the post-questionnaire was meant to determine if there would be any statistical difference between the two groups in their overall writing motivation and its components, including enjoyment, self-efficacy, instrumentality, recognition, and effort due to the intervention.

Procedure

At the beginning of the intervention, the students were asked to anonymously complete the pre-intervention questionnaire on enjoyment, self-efficacy, instrumentality, recognition, and effort in 20 minutes. The researchers designed a teaching material for the experimental group based on the principles of dialogue journal writing and requested two TEFL instructors to review it. The researchers revised the material based on the comments and feedback. One of the researchers (the corresponding author) then trained one EFL instructor for two days to conduct the intervention.

The students were introduced to the concepts and principles of dialogue journal writing. They were also informed about the purpose, duration, their roles, and nature of the feedback during the 10-week intervention period. Two sample dialogue journal entries were copied and distributed to each experimental group student to make them aware of a good dialogue journal entry. Following this, each of them was given one dialogue journal writing notebook provided by the researchers to help them write their journal entries during the treatment period.

Then, the experimental group students were instructed writing through DJW for 10 weeks, twice a week. The teacher began the lesson with brainstorming questions based on the activities given in the teaching material. The students then started to generate their ideas based on the writing prompts provided in the material, organized their ideas, drafted, and required their peers' feedback. Then, each of them was required to write their dialogue

journal entry in five to ten lines or sentences at the top half of the notebook. The instructor played a vital role during the lesson in encouraging the students to feel free and focus on the content rather than worrying about making errors. He was also required to go around the class guide and support the students where necessary.

When the time ended, the teacher collected the students' dialogue journal entries, read them carefully, and responded to each dialogue journal entry, focusing on content mainly by asking questions, triggering them for further thinking, giving suggestions, etc., at the bottom half of their dialogue journal entry. In this regard, Nunan and Richards (2015) underlined that teachers' feedback in DJW should focus on students 'ideas' and 'comments' instead of grammatical or mechanical problems. When they met in the next period, the teacher returned each student's dialogue journal entry with his comments to the students. He then requested them to carefully read the teacher's suggestions, comments, questions, etc., and write back to him based on the given comments or questions in the class. The teacher walked around the class and assisted them where necessary. The teacher then recollected their journal entry, reread their replies, and either provided further feedback if he felt they had not addressed his concerns or allowed them to proceed to the next dialogue journal entry. This has been continued for the 10 consecutive weeks of the intervention period. The students in the experimental group wrote all their dialogue journals and replied to the teacher's comments in the classroom. This was done to avoid copying from the internet or other colleagues if asked to do it as homework. In this regard, Walter-Echols (2008) underlined that DJW should usually take place in class instead of asking the students as a homework activity. On the other hand, the comparison group was instructed through the regular method of instruction. At the end of the semester, the post-intervention writing motivation questionnaire was administered to both groups and completed in 20 minutes.

Data Analysis

The data collected through a closed-ended questionnaire were analyzed using an independent sample t-test, paired sample t-test, and one-way MANOVA computed using SPSS version 26. These tests were chosen as they align with the nature of the study and data type. In this regard, independent sample t-tests and paired sample t-tests are suitable to compare means and one-way MANOVA to analyze multivariate analyses. Therefore, an independent sample t-test was used to check the comparability between the two groups at the onset of the intervention and determine if there was a statistically significant difference in overall writing motivation between the two groups in the post-intervention phase. Assumptions for this test

such as the absence of outliers, normality of the data, and homogeneity of variances were checked using boxplots, the Shapiro-Wilk test, and Levene's test, respectively, and met. A paired sample t-test was used to check if there was any statistically significant difference between the pre- and post-intervention mean scores of each group separately.

One-way MANOVA was used to compute multivariate and univariate comparisons between the two groups considering the means of the five dependent variables: enjoyment, self-efficacy, instrumentality, recognition, and effort both before the intervention to determine the homogeneity between the two groups and after the intervention to investigate the statistically significant difference between the experimental and comparison due to the intervention. Before conducting this analysis, the researchers checked all assumptions, such as univariate and multivariate outliers, multivariate normality, linearity, homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices, and multicollinearity, and no serious violations were found.

RESULTS

Results before the Intervention

Before the commencement of the experiment, the comparability between the two groups was checked using an independent sample t-test, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Independent Sample T-test Results of Overall Motivation Before the Intervention

Variable	Group	N	Mean	SD	t	df	p	Cohen's d
Overall Motivation	Experimental	37	104.22	12.93	.014	70	.989	.003
	Comparison	35	104.17	13.97				

As can be seen in Table 1, there were almost similar mean scores between the experimental (M = 104.22, SD = 12.93) and comparison (M = 104.17, SD = 13.97) groups. The result of the independent sample t-test revealed no significant prewriting motivation score difference between the two groups (t (70) = .014, p>.05, with a very small effect size (d = .003). Besides, a one-way MANOVA was computed to check if there was any statistically significant mean difference between the experimental and comparison groups on the subcomponents of motivation (enjoyment, self-efficacy, instrumentality, recognition, and effort) following descriptive statistics as displayed here.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for Subcomponents of Motivation Before the Intervention

Variables	Group	Mean	SD	N
Enjoyment	Experimental	41.54	6.21	37
	Comparison	42.23	6.32	35
Self-Efficacy	Experimental	25.57	3.86	37
	Comparison	25.26	3.97	35
Instrumentality	Experimental	12.81	2.48	37
	Comparison	13.14	2.92	35
Recognition	Experimental	14.08	3.02	37
	Comparison	13.68	3.19	35
Effort	Experimental	10.22	1.60	37
	Comparison	9.86	2.25	35

Table 2 reveals that there were slight mean differences between the experimental and comparison groups on enjoyment (M = 41.54, SD = 6.21; M = 42.23, SD = 6.32), self-efficacy (M = 25.57, SD = 3.86; M = 25.26, SD = 3.97), instrumentality (M = 12.81, SD = 2.48; M = 13.14, SD = 3.19), recognition (M = 14.08, SD = 3.02; M = 13.68, SD = 3.19) and effort (M = 10.22, SD = 1.60; M = 9.86, SD = 2.25) for the experimental and comparison groups, respectively. A one-way MANOVA was computed to check if these slight mean differences between the two groups were statistically significant.

Table 3. Results of One-way MANOVA on the Sub-components of Writing Motivation before the Intervention

Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Group	Pillai's Trace	0.024	.320[b]	5.000	66.000	0.899	0.024
	Wilks' Lambda	0.976	.320[b]	5.000	66.000	0.899	0.024
	Hotelling's Trace	0.024	.320[b]	5.000	66.000	0.899	0.024
	Roy's Largest Root	0.024	.320[b]	5.000	66.000	0.899	0.024

a. Design: Intercept + Group

b. Exact statistic

c. Computed using alpha = .05

The results of one-way MANOVA in Table 3 reveal no statistically significant difference between the experimental and comparison groups, Wilks's lambda (Λ) = 0.976, F (5,66) = 0.320, p = 0.899, η^2 = 0.024. This shows no significant differences between the

two groups' writing motivation on a combined set of dependent variables (enjoyment, self-efficacy, instrumentality, recognition, and effort) at the onset of the intervention. Hence, the independent sample t-test and one-way MANOVA results confirmed that the two groups were comparable before the intervention, and any difference recorded in the post-intervention result was attributed to the intervention (DJW).

Results of Post-intervention

After the experiment, the post-intervention data were collected through a writing motivation questionnaire. Descriptive (mean and standard division) and inferential (independent sample t-test, paired sample t-test, and one-way MANOVA) statistics were used to analyze the data after checking their assumptions.

Table 4. Independent Sample T-test Results of Overall Writing Motivation in the Post-intervention Phase

Variable	Group	N	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig.	Cohen's d
Overall Motivation	Experimental	37	122.11	10.17	6.204	70	.000	1.46
	Comparison	35	104.54	13.67				

Table 4 reveals that the experimental group instructed writing through DJW had a higher mean score (M = 122.11, SD = 10.17) than the comparison group (M = 104.54, SD = 13.67) taught writing through the conventional method. The independent sample t-test results showed a statistically significant difference between the experimental and comparison groups regarding overall writing motivation t (70) = 6.204, p<0.5, with a large effect size, d = 1.46. This implies that employing DJW in writing class significantly boosted Ethiopian EFL students' writing motivation, proving the feasibility of the intervention in the EFL context. A paired sample t-test was conducted to determine the within-group changes in each group over time, as shown here.

Table 5. Paired Sample T-test Results for Overall Writing Motivation for Both Groups

Group	Pre-motivation			Postmotivation			Df	t-value	P-value	Cohen's d
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD				
Experimental	37	104.22	12.93	37	122.11	10.17	36	-6.578	.000	1.54
Comparison	35	104.17	13.97	35	104.54	13.69	34	-.114	.910	0.03

As can be seen in Table 5, the experimental group writing motivation scores significantly increased from the pre-intervention phase (M = 104.22, SD = 12.93) to the post-intervention phase (M = 122.11, SD = 10.17), t (36) = -6.578, p<.05, d = 1.54. On the contrary, the comparison group did not show any significant change, with the pre- (M = 104.17, SD = 13.97) and post-intervention writing motivation scores (M = 104.54, SD = 13.69, t (34) = -.114, p>.910, d = .03. The result implies that implementing DJW in writing class significantly improved the experimental group students' writing motivation compared to the comparison group taught through the usual method.

The second purpose of the study was to investigate if DJW significantly enhanced EFL students' writing motivation in terms of its sub-components, such as enjoyment, self-efficacy, instrumentality, recognition, and effort, as combined and separate dependent variables.

Table 6. Descriptive Statistics of Motivation Sub-components in the Post-intervention Phase

Variables	Group	Mean	SD	N
Enjoyment	Experimental	49.84	5.03	37
	Comparison	42.60	6.40	35
Self-efficacy	Experimental	29.94	3.09	37
	Comparison	25.03	4.29	35
Instrumentality	Experimental	15.35	2.46	37
	Comparison	13.31	2.78	35
Recognition	Experimental	14.76	1.53	37
	Comparison	13.23	2.29	35
Effort	Experimental	12.22	2.00	37
	Comparison	10.37	2.35	35

As shown in Table 6, the EG outperformed the comparison group in all components of writing motivation in the post-intervention phase. In this regard, the mean scores of enjoyment, self-efficacy, instrumentality, recognition and effort for the experimental group (M = 49.84, SD = 5.03; M = 29.94, SD = 3.09; M = 15.35, SD = 2.46; M = 14.76, SD = 1.53; M = 12.22, SD = 2.00) were higher than the comparison group's mean scores of enjoyment (M = 42.60, SD = 6.40), self-efficacy (M = 25.03, SD = 4.29), instrumentality (M = 13.31, SD = 2.78), recognition (M = 13.23 SD = 2.29) and effort (M = 10.37, SD = 2.35). This reveals that DJW highly improved the experimental group students' writing motivation compared to the comparison group students.

Following this, a one-way MANOVA was computed to determine the combined effect of DJW on the five dependent variables (enjoyment, self-efficacy, instrumentality, recognition, and effort).

Table 7. Results of One-way MANOVA on Sub-components of Motivation in the Post-intervention Phase

Multivariate Tests[a]

Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Group	Pillai's Trace	0.371	7.797[b]	5.000	66.000	0.000	0.371
	Wilks' Lambda	0.629	7.797[b]	5.000	66.000	0.000	0.371
	Hotelling's Trace	0.591	7.797[b]	5.000	66.000	0.000	0.371
	Roy's Largest Root	0.591	7.797[b]	5.000	66.000	0.000	0.371

a. Design: Intercept + Group

b. Exact statistic

c. Computed using alpha = .05

The results of one-way MANOVA revealed a statistically significant effect of DJW on the combined dependent variables, Wilks' Lambda = 0.629, F (5,66) = 7.797, P = .000, η^2_p = 0.371. This tells us that the intervention (DJW) significantly enhanced learners' writing motivation. The partial eta squared (η^2_p) = 0.371 indicates that the intervention accounts for 37.1% of the variance in the combined dependent variables.

Table 8. Results of Separate ANOVAs between Groups on each of the Five Components of Motivation

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source		Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Group	Enjoyment	942.226	1	942.226	28.634	0.000	0.290
	Self-efficacy	434.914	1	434.914	31.487	0.000	0.310
	Instrumentality	74.636	1	74.636	10.840	0.002	0.134
	Recognition	42.004	1	42.004	11.180	0.001	0.138
	Effort	61.211	1	61.211	12.889	0.001	0.155
Error	Enjoyment	2303.427	70	32.906			
	Self-efficacy	966.863	70	13.812			
	Instrumentality	481.975	70	6.885			
	Recognition	262.982	70	3.757			
	Effort	332.442	70	4.749			

Based on the combined one-way MANOVA results, a follow-up univariate ANOVA, adjusted using the Bonferroni method (p = 0.05/5, ηp2 = 0.01), was computed to investigate the effect of dialogue journal writing on each dependent (enjoyment, self-efficacy, instrumentality, recognition, and effort) variable separately. The results revealed a significant impact of DJW on each of the dependent variables, including enjoyment (F(1,70 = 28.634, p = 0.000, ηp2 = 0.290), self-efficacy (F(1,70 = 31.487, p = 0.000, ηp2 =0.310), instrumentality (F(1,70 = 10.840, p = 0.002, ηp2 = 0.134), recognition (F(1,70 = 11.180, P = 0.001, ηp2 = 0.138) and effort (F(1,70 = 12.889, p = 0.001, ηp2 = 0.155), respectively. This shows that self-efficacy exhibited the largest effect size (.310), followed by enjoyment (.290), effort (.155), recognition (.138), and instrumentality (.134), showing that 31%, 29%, 15.5%, 13.8% and 13.4% of the variance was explained by DJW. This reveals that self-efficacy was most impacted by dialogue journal writing, which had the most robust effect size compared to the other dependent variables. According to the findings, it can be concluded that dialogue journal writing substantially enhances overall writing motivation and its five components (enjoyment, self-efficacy, instrumentality, recognition, and effort).

DISCUSSION

This study investigated the efficacy of dialogue journal writing on the EFL students' writing motivation. The findings revealed that dialogue journal writing plays an essential role in enhancing the experimental group students' overall writing motivation, with a large effect size (d = 1.46) suggesting that dialogue journal writing is an effective writing technique for boosting students' writing motivation. The improvement of students' writing motivation could be attributed to the continuous and regular nature of dialogue journal writing in which students participate in authentic, meaningful interactions with the teacher. This result aligns with Holmes and Moulton (1997), who found that using dialogue journal writing increases learners' motivation to write compared to the conventional approach. This benefit is attributed to the absence of error correction and grading in dialogue journal entries, which allows students to focus on expressing their ideas freely. The findings also accord with an earlier study by Rokni and Seifi (2013), which showed that dialogue journal writing improved experimental group students' motivation and helped them write by taking risks. Besides, the findings are consistent with the study of Amirkhanova et al. (2016), who concluded that reflective journal writing improved students' learning, self-confidence, and motivation among upper-intermediate university students at Kazan State University.

Similarly, Denne-Bolton (2013) highlighted that dialogue journal writing enhances learners' motivation to write, increases writing fluency, boosts confidence, and develops their ability to express complex ideas through writing. Additionally, engaging learners in dialogue journal writing enhanced their motivation, which goes with previous findings (Carolina & Zabala, 2021). According to Carolina and Zabala's conclusions, implementing dialogue journals enabled learners to improve their writing fluency, and boosted their motivation and reflection. This study's findings also align with that of Sholah (2019), who reported that journal writing significantly enhanced learners' writing motivation and ability. This study's findings also confirm a previous study by Tuan (2010), which confirmed that journal writing enhances EFL learners' motivation and writing skills and builds student and teacher relationships. Though there have been scanty studies in this area, DJW plays a vital role in boosting EFL learners' writing motivation, which also contributes to improving writing skills, as there was a strong positive correlation between writing motivation and writing performance. Süğümlü et al.'s (2019) findings confirmed that students with high writing motivation scored better in their writing skills.

In addition to overall writing motivation, implementing dialogue journal writing also enhanced EFL learners' self-efficacy with a moderate effect size ($\eta p2 = 0.310$), one of the components of writing motivation. This finding aligns with Ovitt (2024), who reported that using dialogue journal writing as a classroom technique enhanced the confidence and self-efficacy of students with disabilities. The teacher's private, tailored and continuous feedback using dialogue journal writing likely contributed to this improvement. The study by Rana (2018) also aligns with this research, showing that learners' engagement in dialogue journal writing increases their self-confidence. This is because teachers encourage learners to focus on meaning instead of form. Furthermore, Liao and Wong's (2010) study demonstrated that dialogue journal writing enhances learners' self-confidence, supporting this study's results showing that dialogue journal writing significantly impacts self-efficacy.

Similarly, dialogue journal writing significantly boosted writing motivation, particularly in terms of enjoyment, with a modest effect size ($\eta p2 = 0.290$). Barseghyan's (2021) study is also congruent with this finding, noting that regular written interactions with the teacher through dialogue journal writing enhanced enjoyment, one of the components of writing motivation. The study also positively impacted other components of motivation including instrumentality, recognition, and effort with a modest effect size. These outcomes could be attributed to the continuous, regular, and meaning-focused written interactions between the students and the teacher during the 10-week intervention, which fostered a non-threatening,

supportive, and authentic learning environment, despite scanty studies available in these areas.

Conclusion, Implications, Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

The findings of this study highlight the effectiveness of dialogue journal writing in enhancing the writing motivation of freshman EFL students in the higher education context, in Ethiopia. Dialogue journal writing proved to be more effective than the conventional method, as it significantly fosters overall writing motivation, in general, and self-efficacy and engagement in particular. It mainly addresses the challenges students encounter due to low confidence and lack of active engagement. The result further suggests that employing dialogue journal writing in the writing instruction of EFL context creates a conducive environment to enhance writing motivation which is one of the determinant factors for the success of students' writing performance.

This encourages EFL teachers to adopt dialogue journal writing as an innovative instructional technique. Additionally, this allows material designers to integrate dialogue journal writing as a technique of teaching writing while revising the existing conventional material or designing new material for freshman students. Besides, administrators such as academic units of higher education are expected to support the implementation of dialogue journal writing to enhance students' writing performance.

Despite these promising findings, this study is not without limitations. The small sample size limits its generalizability. Similarly, the 10-week intervention may lead to short-term effects.

Therefore, future studies should include a larger and more diverse participant group to generalize the study findings to a larger population. Future studies could also extend the intervention periods to investigate long-term outcomes.

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Appendix

Writing Motivation Questionnaire

Hawassa University

College of Social Sciences and Humanities

Department of English Language and Literature

Dear Students,

The main purpose of this questionnaire is to gather data about your *motivation towards writing skills* for a study on "*An Investigation into the Impact of Dialogue Journal Writing on the Writing Motivation of EFL Freshman Students in Ethiopia*".

Your genuine response in completing this motivation questionnaire is essential for the study's success. Your responses will be used only for research purposes and remain confidential. Please give your responses honestly.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

I. Code _____

II. English Writing Motivation Questionnaire

INSTRUCTION: Read the following items carefully and put a tick mark (√) on your level of agreement or disagreement in the appropriate box. The response scale is as follows:

SD = Strongly Disagree = 1   D = Disagree = 2   U = Uncertain = 3   A = Agree= 5

SA = Strongly Agree = 5

No	Items	Level of agreement				
I	**Enjoyment**	**SD 1**	**D 2**	**U 3**	**A 4**	**SA 5**
1	I enjoy writing.					
2	I dislike jotting down my thoughts. (R)					
3	I use correct grammar in my writing.					
4	I complete a writing assignment even when it is difficult.					
5	Becoming a good writer contributes to my academic success.					
6	I write like other students.					
7	I can't write more than the minimum in my writing assignments. (R)					
8	I invest a lot of effort into my writing.					
9	I like participating in written online discussions.					
10	I dislike like getting feedback from an instructor on my writing. (R)					
11	I can clearly express my ideas in writing.					
12	I easily focus on what I am writing.					
13	I like my writing to be graded					

II	**Self-efficacy**	SD 1	D 2	U 3	A 4	SA 5
14	I am more likely to succeed if I can write effectively.					
15	It is not easy for me to write good paragraphs. (R)					
16	I enjoy classes that require a lot of writing.					
17	I do not plan my writing before putting it on paper. (R)					
18	Becoming a better writer is important to me.					
19	Being a better writer will help me in my career.					
20	It is vital to me to score an A grade in a writing course.					
III	**Instrumentality**	SD 1	D 2	U 3	A 4	SA 5
21	I enjoy challenging writing activities.					
22	I revise my writing before submitting an assignment.					
23	Punctuation is not easy for me. (R)					
24	I like writing even if my writing will not be graded.					
IV	**Recognition**	SD 1	D 2	U 3	A 4	SA 5
25	I do not like others to read what I have written. (R)					
26	I enjoy writing research papers.					
27	I would like to have more opportunities to write in classes.					
28	Being a good writer is essential in getting a good job in the future.					
V	**Effort**	SD 1	D 2	U 3	A 4	SA 5
29	I practice writing to improve my writing skills.					
30	I want to get an excellent grade in writing courses.					
31	I like answering multiple-choice questions more than writing paragraphs. (R)					

Adapted from Payne (2012)