Myanmar EFL pre-service teachers' motivational disposition in English writing: A pilot study

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ABSTRACT

Since acquiring writing skills in the English language is a multiplex task as it includes several complex cognitive activities (Tillema, 2012), it is a challenging skill to master for English as a foreign language (EFL) students. The acquisition of this skill is also affected by motivation, which has a great impact on the success or failure of learning the target language (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011), and significantly influences the learner's academic and professional performance (Csizér & Dörnyei, 2005). Lack of research focusing on investigating the motivating effect of different aspects of English writing in the Myanmar context provided inspiration to conduct the present pilot study, which focused on mapping the motivational profile of 54 EFL pre-service teachers in English writing in Myanmar. The questionnaire developed by the authors was piloted in September 2020. Results indicate that out of the 12 dimensions measured, pre-service teachers' ideal selves and instrumental motivation seem to be the most motivating aspects of English writing, and there is a strong correlation between these two scales suggesting that the participants' ideal L2 self has a pragmatic focus. Moreover, regression analysis shows that pre-service teachers' intrinsic motivation, and their ideal selves contribute most to their motivated learning behavior.

INTRODUCTION

This paper describes the development of a quantitative questionnaire aiming to reveal what motivates Myanmar EFL pre-service teachers the most within their English writing activities, and which dimensions related to English writing contribute the most to the motivated learning behavior of the pre-service teachers. The paper also describes the process of the validation and piloting. Additionally, this study is aimed to inform EFL teacher educators through its implications so that they can teach pre-service teachers in a more motivating manner, improving their skills in teaching English writing through the process writing approach over the long term as well as developing EFL pre-service teachers' English writing performance through this writing approach in the long run. The fact that in the areas of motivation in second language (L2) learning, especially in English writing, with a special focus on the Myanmar context no literature was found provided inspiration to conduct the present pilot study.

The data obtained from the survey revealed that the items and scales chosen for the questionnaire needed some modifications before the main study would be launched;

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nevertheless, it provided meaningful insights into the investigated phenomenon and made it possible for the researchers to answer the formulated research questions. The results of the study indicate that out of the 12 dimensions measured, pre-service teachers' ideal L2 selves and instrumental motivation are statistically equally important and seem to be the most motivating aspects of English writing in the Myanmar context. Moreover, pre-service teachers' intrinsic motivation, and their ideal L2 selves contribute the most to their motivated learning behavior.

RATIONALE

Several researchers have acknowledged that mastering English writing skills comprises diverse complex cognitive activities (Tillema, 2012) in the phases of planning, formulating, structuring and revising writing (Hayes, 1996; Onozawa, 2010), and therefore, it is more than a matter of speech written down (Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad, & Finegan, 1999; McCarthy & Carter, 1994). Since writing skills require such cognitive linguistic activities, English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers make a huge effort to master teaching writing to their students, and EFL students themselves assume that acquiring writing skills in English language is stressful. In Myanmar, English is used as a foreign language and all students learn this language from kindergarten age. Most of the textbooks in all basic education schools and universities are written in English (Lall, 2020; Nwet, 2017). Therefore, teachers and students from all levels need to become proficient in this language.

Nwet (2017) stated that writing has an increasing significance for Myanmar pre-service teachers as it represents the main medium they use to do assignments in the different subject areas and answer examination questions. In fact, they find it very difficult to write properly and they seem to have difficulties sharing their ideas and thoughts. As a result, most of them cannot accomplish their tasks properly; they are afraid of writing about a topic or an assignment. Nwet (2017) also claimed that they do not know how to start, how to generate ideas and how to conclude an essay, they have few technical skills of writing acceptable compositions in English.

On the one hand, most of the language teachers in the universities of Myanmar still use conventional techniques, using lecturing while teaching (Nwet, 2017); they unwittingly teach their large classes through traditional methods, due to the fact that the education system in Myanmar is still an exam-oriented one, it is highly centralized with universities lacking autonomy due to the military rule for over 50 years (Hayden & Martin, 2013). In spite of the new education system being implemented (Than, 2018), the majority of students still learn the subject material by heart and apply rote learning in order to sit their exams (Lall, 2020; Soe, Swe, Aye, & Mon, 2017). Consequently, students become weak in acquiring English skills, especially in writing performance. According to the EF English Proficiency Index (EF EPI)'s report in 2020, Myanmar ranked 93rd out of 100 countries in English Proficiency for non-native speakers. Therefore,

Myanmar EFL teachers would benefit from empirical studies contributing to quality teaching, increasing students' English writing abilities, and solving problems in the practicum.

It has been revealed by various researchers that motivation plays a key role in language learning, including the acquisition of writing skills, because it has a great impact on the success or failure of a learner's learning in the target language (Dörnyei, 1998; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011; Gardner & Lambert, 1959; Keller, 1983), and it significantly influences the learner's academic and professional performance (Csizér & Dörnyei, 2005; Winke, 2013). As Dörnyei and Ottó (1998) stated,

> motivation in language learning is the dynamically changing cumulative arousal in a person that initiates, directs, coordinates, amplifies, terminates, and evaluates the cognitive and motor processes whereby initial wishes and desires are selected, prioritized, operationalized and (successfully or unsuccessfully) acted out (p. 65).

Following the researchers' claims, motivation is the key factor which can influence learners in their ways to achieve their goals. However, there is lack of research focusing on investigating the motivating effect of different aspects of English writing in the Myanmar context, and this reason provided inspiration for us to conduct the present pilot study, which focused on mapping the motivational profile of 54 EFL pre-service teachers in English writing in Myanmar.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Motivation for language learners

The term *motivation* is frequently used in the field of education and educational research (Dörnyei, 1998). Motivation theories are very complex comprising and connected to several psychological perspectives of human behavior. Motivation to learn an L2 is particularly compound, and it presents a unique situation within motivational psychology due to the multifaceted nature and roles of language itself (Dörnyei, 1996). In his view, motivation to learn an L2 is more complex and difficult than in other school subjects since language is a communication coding system; language is an integral part of the individual's identity involved in almost all mental activities; and language is the most important channel of social organization embedded in the culture of the community where it is used.

Moreover, Williams (1994) argues that learning a foreign language involves an alteration in self-image and the adoption of new social and cultural behaviors and ways of being; therefore, it has a significant impact on the social nature of the learner. As motivation to learn an L2 is particularly complex and presents a unique situation within motivational psychology due to the versatile nature and roles of language itself (Dörnyei, 1996), it can be assumed that it is not an easy job for language teachers to motivate learners. However, there are several motivational theories, discussed in the following section, which may be beneficial for and applicable by language teachers in motivating their learners.

Additionally, there are diverse skills in the acquisition of L2 learning (Tillema, 2012; Tribble, 1996), however, the present pilot study is primarily focused on English writing skills due to the fact that EFL pre-service teachers are facing challenges in acquiring English writing, and teaching writing is a difficult skill for EFL teacher educators in Myanmar (Nwet, 2017). Therefore, it inspired us to explore pre-service teachers' motivational disposition in English writing, which may have a great impact on a learner's success or failure of L2 learning (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011), and which plays a major role in influencing the learner's academic performance in L2 learning (Csizér & Dörnyei, 2005).

The L2 Motivational Self System, significant others and instrumentality

In this section, the possible selves (the ideal L2 self and the ought-to L2 selves), significant others, intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation and positive learning experiences as well as instrumental motivation are discussed. The L2 Motivational Self System has garnered interest in L2 motivation research since the middle of the first decade in the 2000s. It was theorized by a Hungarian psycholinguist, Dörnyei (2005), as a comprehensive synthesis of his past research on language learning motivation. His theory was constructed as a result of the combination of two significant theoretical developments, one taking place in the L2 field, the other in mainstream psychology (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). The latter is concerned with Markus and Nurius' (1986) theory.

Markus and Nurius (1986) claimed that the notion of *possible selves* is one of the most powerful mechanisms which links the self with action. According to them, possible selves represent how individuals see themselves in a future state; how they imagine what they might become in the future, what they want to be in the future and what they would like to avoid becoming. Possible selves are related to one's hopes, expectations, wishes and fantasies (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). On the one hand, Markus and Nurius (1986) view possible selves as they are a reality for the individual, which means people can visualize a possible self. On the other hand, Markus and Ruvolo (1989) argue that possible selves are very close to the actual thoughts and feelings that individuals experience as they are in the process of motivated behavior and instrumental action.

In this regard, according to Higgins (1987, 1998), there are two types of possible selves; the ideal self and the ought-to self. The former one is particularly important for guiding academic achievement of a learner, whereas the latter one refers to the representation of attributes that one believes one ought to possess (e.g., representation of someone else's sense of duties, obligations or moral responsibilities).

In Csizér's (2019) view, the ideal L2 self involves the individual's own vision for him or herself, while the ought-to L2 self involves someone else's vision for the individual which bears little resemblance to one's own desires or wishes or the possibility of ever attaining them. However, the ideal and ought-to L2 selves seem similar to each other, they are both related to the attainment of a desired-end state. This idea is supported by Higgins' (1998) theory that there are two different types of future self-guides that are motivationally distinct from each other; ideal self-guides which have a promotion focus and ought-to self-guides which have a prevention focus. The former concerns hopes, aspirations, advancements, growth and accomplishments. The latter regulates the absence or presence of negative outcomes associated with failing to live up to various responsibilities and obligations (Csizér, 2019).

Apart from the ideal L2 self, the ought-to L2 self, Dörnyei (2005) proposed a third component, the L2 learning experience, and the three make up the L2 Motivational Self System. The L2 learning experience includes situated, executive motives related to the immediate learning environment and experience, for example, the impact of the teacher, the curriculum, the peer group or the experience of success (Csizér, 2019).

It should be noted that some of the components that make up the L2 learning experience may be assumed to be evoked by *significant others* in the individual's motivation to learn the L2 because the impact of the teacher or peers may affect one's motives to learn the L2. This perception is supported by Williams and Burden's (1997) words "An individual's motivation is also subject to social and contextual influences" (p. 23). According to them, "the social and contextual influences include the whole culture and context and the social situation, as well as significant other people and the individual's interaction with these people" (p. 23). By reviewing these words, it can be concluded that family members, peers, classmates, teachers, headmasters, neighbors etc., in other words, all of the people around the learner who matter to the learner, might be included in the concept of *significant others*. In this respect, Williams and Burden (1997) differentiate motivational factors as learner internal, which include intrinsic interest, perceived value of activity, mastery and self-concept, and learner external, which include significant individuals, interaction with significant individuals, the learning environment and the broader context. These aspects of significant others influence the learner's basic psychological needs and correspondingly, their motivational orientation (Noels et al., 2019).

Instrumental motivation is a landmark concept in motivation research which is related to the practical benefits of acquiring an L2 (Gardner & Lambert, 1959), for example, passing the examination, achieving the scholarship award to study abroad or getting a better grade in class. On the other hand, according to Noels (2001, 2005) and Ryan and Deci (2018), instrumental motivation is strongly correlated with external regulations and thus, it can be regarded as a kind of extrinsic motivation. This idea is supported by Liu, Hau and Zhen's (2018) statement claiming that "extrinsic motivation can be internalized into one's self-regulation and can facilitate academic achievement, performance, achievement goals and even well-being" (p. 186).

Considering the concepts discussed in this section, all the components of the L2 Motivational Self System, significant others and instrumental motivation as well as motivated learning behavior, which is the criterion variable scale, were

used as dimensions to conduct the present questionnaire study in the Myanmar context.

Resilience and motivation

Various researchers have revealed that there are several psychological characteristics that forecast students' academic achievement, including writing skills, with the result of them being successful or unsuccessful in their learning (Martin, 2013; Cassidy, 2016). One of the psychological characteristics is resilience. Bartley, Schoon, Mitchell, and Blane (2010) expressed that an individual's performance, achievement, health, and wellbeing are greatly and positively influenced by their resilience, to be more precise, their superior quality, strength, or asset as well as advantageous characteristic that they are likely to possess. Cassidy (2016) defined resilience as "a psychological construct observed in some individuals that accounts for success despite adversity" (p. 1), which reflects "the ability to bounce back, to beat the odds and is considered an asset in human characteristic terms" (p. 1).

Academic resilience can be defined as the capacity of a student to overcome chronic adversity that is seen as a major threat to their educational development (Martin, 2013). This opinion is supported by the OECD's (2018) report that on average, across OECD countries, students who have relatively more advantaged socio-economic profiles and better disciplinary climates become academically resilient students who display positive behaviors and attitudes towards learning; for example, they do not skip classes, they are being highly motivated to earn good grades and succeed in school. Interestingly, Jowkar, Kojuri, Kohoulat, and Hayat (2014) posit that academically resilient students have an ability to sustain high levels of achievement motivation and performance, although they have the risk of doing poorly in school, and ultimately dropping out of school, due to challenging situations. Regarding this, they affirm that the role of motivation is central to educational resilience. Based on the facts discussed above, it may be assumed that motivation plays a key role in students' academic resilience in order to achieve the desirable educational outcomes, including the acquisition of English writing skills. Therefore, the resilience has been chosen as one of the dimensions in the pilot questionnaire to fulfil the major aim of this study.

Competition and motivation

Human competition is a contest between two or more people in which they are trying their best to achieve the desired goal that cannot be shared between them, resulting in those who will win and those who will not win at the end of the contest (Cantador & Conde, 2010). DiMenichi and Tricomi (2015) view competition as a means to improve effort-based learning and attention of students. Fülöp (2009) found that students with different cultural backgrounds, consider competition as a means of improvement and motivation. Garcia, Tor, and Schiff (2013) claim that competition can be regarded as a social comparison, which means the tendency

to self-evaluate by comparing oneself to others, which is an important source of competitive behavior.

According to Cantador and Conde (2010), the idea of competition is very evident in sports matches, in which teams provide their best efforts to win the first prize in a tournament. Similarly, in essay competitions in universities, students yield their highest level of performance in essay writing so that they can win the first prize. There are two kinds of competition – individual and team competition. Cantador and Conde (2010) argue that team competition is less harmful to students, and it can effectively improve their learning skills due to the fact that each member from the team can cooperate with one another, and participate anonymously rather than in individual competition. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that competition has a positive impact on education since Verhoeff (1997) claims that a well-organized, and challenging competition elicits the participants' best efforts, enhances their motivation and learning, and helps them avoid failure in learning. This claim is supported by Lawrence (2004), who claims that competition encourages active learning and increases motivation as well as Fulu (2007), who argues that competition can cause several advantages for students such as recognition gain, higher motivation, and self-esteem. All in all, it may be assumed that competition and motivation are interconnected with each other, and competition might have an impact on students' motivation in order to achieve the desired educational outcomes. This inspired the researchers to include competition as one of the dimensions in the pilot questionnaire exploring the motivational disposition of pre-service teachers in English writing.

Approaches to writing

Tribble (1996) claims that there are three approaches to writing, *the product writing approach, the process writing approach* and *the genre approach. Product writing is an approach* to teaching writing that focuses on students' final products, that is, the text they are asked to produce. It is a traditional approach to teaching writing and students are encouraged to focus on their end products and they do not need to generate and brainstorm ideas. In this approach, while students are writing, other processes or skills are neglected such as classroom activities and communicative language strategies which are important in language learning, providing an insight that the major weakness of this approach is focusing entirely on the learners' final product rather than on the actual writing process.

One approach that has had a major impact on language writing instruction is *the process approach.* Tribble (1996) claims that *the process approach* is an approach to the teaching of writing which stresses the creativity of the individual writer, and pays attention to the development of good writing practices rather than the imitation of models. Therefore, it may be assumed that *the process approach* helps students write better by aiding them in the actual process of writing. Badger and White (2000) argue that *the process writing* is an approach that is concerned with linguistic writing skills, namely
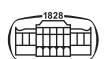
planning, revising, drafting and editing, rather than linguistic writing knowledge, namely structure and mechanics. It concentrates on teaching writing through the process and stages of writing (Belinda, 2006). Hyland (2003) lists five stages of the process writing approach which are as follows:

1. pre-writing,
2. drafting,
3. revising,
4. editing and
5. publishing.

Badger and White (2000) argue that *the genre approach* is the extension of *the product approach*. It does not give adequate emphasis to the linguistic skills that language learners require to master to be able to effectively and actively produce a piece of writing in the absence of specific writing instructions (Al-Sawalha, 2014). In *genre approach*, the elements that teachers and learners should take into account are the purpose of the writing, the subject matter, the target audience, the relationship between the writer and the audience, and the organization patterns (Badger & White, 2000).

In contrast, as mentioned earlier, *process writing approach* is one which prefers to teach writing that focuses on the creative process of producing a text. It focuses more on the varied classroom activities which promote the development of language use. In this approach, the teacher teaches students to write effectively knowing who their target audience is and ignoring the final product. Students have an opportunity to manage their own writing and a chance to think as they write. Since the 1980s, the process approach has been accepted and applied to EFL and ESL writing classes because of its effectiveness (Onozawa, 2010) and thus, this approach has been selected as one of the research scopes for the author's main study.

METHOD

Based on the purpose of the study and the reviewed literature, the following research questions were formulated:

1. Are the constructs of the pilot questionnaire reliable?
2. What characterizes pre-service teachers' motivational disposition in English writing in the Myanmar context?
3. What relationships characterize the dimensions related to English writing?
4. Which dimensions of English writing contribute the most to the motivated learning behavior of pre-service teachers in the context?

In order to answer these research questions, the quantitative research paradigm was used in the questionnaire survey. Since one of the strengths of the questionnaire is that it is "relatively easy to construct, extremely versatile and uniquely capable of gathering a large amount of information quickly in a form that is readily processable" (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 88), it was used as an instrument in measuring what the respondents thought of the motivational aspects of English writing in the context investigated. The questionnaire study was carried out in the form of Qualtrics online survey due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The online version of the questionnaire rendered several advantages to the authors such as reduced costs, convenience of administration, automatic coding, high level of anonymity and international access as well as access to specialized populations (Dörnyei, 2007).

The Myanmar context

The study was carried out at a teacher training university in Myanmar. The university has been primarily responsible for providing pre-service and in-service teacher training since 2004, offering Bachelor of Education (a 5-year program), Master of Education (a 2-year program), Master of Philosophy (a 2-year program) and Doctor of Philosophy (a 5-year program) as well as a Post Graduate Diploma in Multimedia Arts (PGDMA; a 2-year program) in education with respect to the prospective primary, secondary and tertiary school teachers in Myanmar. Apart from the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) program, the other programs are intended to train in-service teachers. For the purpose of this pilot study, pre-service teachers who are majoring in English language teaching were selected. English in Myanmar is not considered to be ESL (English as a Second Language), but EFL (English as a Foreign Language), as English is not an official language of the country.

Participants

The participants in the pilot were 54 EFL pre-service teachers from one teacher training university in Myanmar, who will become novice English teachers in Basic Education High Schools in the country under the Ministry of Education, after they have achieved their Bachelor of Education Degree. The sampling for this piloting was purposive sampling (Dörnyei, 2007) as the participants of the study were pre-service teachers majoring in English language teaching from the selected university from Myanmar.

The respondents of the study were 36 female and 18 male EFL pre-service teachers between the ages of 18 and 20, who are currently studying for their Bachelor of Education Degree at Sagaing University of Education. Among the 54 respondents, 32 pre-service teachers had passed their second year from Sagaing University of Education, and 22 pre-service teachers had accomplished their second year from Education Degree Colleges. Sixteen respondents came from different states in Myanmar, whereas 38 respondents came from different regions.

Instrument

Based on the literature review and brainstorming, the pilot questionnaire contained a total of 13 scales made up of 88 items related to L2 motivational dimensions in English writing plus a criterion variable scale, which was motivated learning behavior (Table 1). The motivational scales were developed by the authors except for the competition scale, which was adapted from Orosz et al. (2018). The criterion

Table 1. Scales of the questionnaire

Motivational dimensions	
1.	5 items targeting what writing topic *difficulty* motivates students (pre-service teachers)
2.	7 items aimed at what kind of *teacher's assessment, comment and feedback*
3.	6 items targeting what kind of writing *topics* motivate students
4.	8 items covering what kind of *pre-writing activities* motivate students
5.	6 items covering what kind of teaching *strategies* motivate students
6.	10 items targeting what kind of *setting* motivates students
7.	7 items directed at *significant others*
8.	6 items on the *ideal L2 self*
9.	7 items dedicated to *intrinsic motivation*
10.	7 items concerned with *instrumental motivation*
11.	7 items measuring *resilience*
12.	5 items related to *competition*
+	
A criterion variable scale	
13.	5 items associated with *motivated learning behavior*

variable construct was taken from Kormos and Csizér (2008). Apart from the scales, the questionnaire had a part where questions related to the biographical background of the participants had to be answered.

The participants had to indicate on a Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree = 1" to "strongly agree = 5" the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the items. All the items were formulated in English as the respondents were pre-service teachers majoring in English language teaching in the context explored.

Procedures

The questionnaire was designed in English as the intended participants of the study were the pre-service teachers from a teacher training university in Myanmar who are majoring in English language teaching. Next, seven PhD students majoring in Education Sciences from a public university in Hungary were asked to comment on the first draft of the questionnaire in order to obtain their feedback, suggestions and critical insights so that the final version could be prepared. The purpose of the peer checking process was to check whether the items of the questionnaire were clear, understandable, and appropriate for undergraduate students between the ages of 18–20.

After receiving their feedback and invaluable suggestions, the final version of the questionnaire was delivered online in September 2020. Having obtained the required data, the statistical data analysis procedures were carried out using SPSS version 26.0. Finally, the results were interpreted in order to answer the research questions and to fulfil the aim of the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, the reliability and comparative analysis of the scales, as well as the relationships between the scales will be presented followed by the discussion based on the statistical results.

Reliability of the scales

In order to answer research question 1 (i.e., Are the constructs of the pilot questionnaire reliable?) the Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficients of the scales were computed. The results can be seen in Table 2.

Based on the results above, the Cronbach's alpha coefficients of the scales in the pilot were generally not high enough, which meant that their internal reliability would need to be improved by leaving out some items after conducting principal component analysis to improve the scales. The scales, which did not reach the 0.6 cut off point after the above procedure were left out of further analysis in this study.

Comparative analysis of the scales

In order to answer the second research question, i.e., "What characterizes pre-service teachers' motivational disposition in English writing in the Myanmar context?", descriptive statistics of the nine remaining scales were computed. The results of the descriptive statistics of the scales, their mean values and standard deviation values are presented below in Table 3 in descending order based on their mean values.

Table 2. Reliability coefficient of the scales

	Construct	Cronbach's α
1.	difficulty	0.458
2.	assessment	0.255
3.	topic	0.608
4.	pre-writing	0.703
5.	strategies	0.514
6.	setting	0.646
7.	significant others	0.651
8.	ideal L2 self	0.640
9.	intrinsic motivation	0.660
10.	instrumental motivation	0.718
11.	resilience	0.543
12.	competition	0.771
13.	motivated learning behaviors	0.692
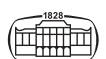
Several conclusions can be drawn from the data in Table 3. At first, it can be observed that the two dimensions of *ideal L2 self and instrumental motivation* exhibited the highest mean values and paired samples *t*-test procedures showed no significant difference between them; therefore, statistically speaking, they are equally motivating for pre-service teachers in their English writing activities.

As far as the motivating aspect of the ideal L2 self is considered, the research findings confirmed the results of the previous studies claiming that the ideal L2 self is a powerful motivator to learn the L2 and a significant amount of variance of achievement in the target language can be explained by the ideal L2 self (Dörnyei & Chan, 2013). Based on the above, it may be generalized that pre-service teachers' ideal L2 self has a significant impact on their English writing motivation and possibly English writing performance to a great extent.

Based on empirical evidence, Gardner and MacIntyre (1991) claim that motivation facilitates learning, and "instrumentally motivated students studied longer than non-instrumentally motivated students when there was an opportunity to profit from learning (p. 57)". Moreover, they highlight that if students are instrumentally motivated, they spend more time thinking in order to find out the correct answer related to their task. Accordingly, based on the findings of this paper, it can be ascertained that instrumental motivation plays a crucial role in the pre-service teachers' motivational disposition in English writing in the context investigated.

If we go to the second band in Table 3, it can be observed that the next three dimensions (*topic, pre-writing*

and intrinsic motivation) resulted in similar values in mean scores and standard deviation scores, proving that they are somewhat less motivating for the participants in their English writing than the first two dimensions; however, they still approximate the higher end of the Likert scale in the range of 4.02–4.11. It means that pre-service teachers thought that they are motivated by a topic which is familiar to them, they feel confident if they use drafts before the actual writing, and they enjoy the writing process. The research findings confirmed the results of previous studies claiming that topic interest improves English writing skills for beginner writers increasing motivation and intellectual activity, and high-interest topics produce better texts (Hidi & McLaren, 1991). Several studies (Al-Sawalha, 2014; Campbell, Smith, & Brooker, 1998; Torrance, Thomas, & Robinson, 1999) revealed that most undergraduate students need drafts while writing and there is a positive correlation between the number of drafts they produced and their text improvement. Moreover, students are motivated to write their texts without anxiety while they are applying the processes in writing (Arici & Kaldirim, 2015), acquiring linguistic writing skills, namely planning, revising, drafting and editing (Badger & White, 2000).

The mean values of the last three dimensions, i.e., *significant others, competition and setting*, revealed that they have the lowest mean values with no significant differences between them ranging from 3.81 to 3.64. The data revealed that these dimensions proved to be the least motivating aspects in the participants' motivational disposition in English writing in the context investigated. In other words, pre-service teachers seem to be less motivated in English writing activities by the people surrounding them (teachers, parents, friends, and classmates, etc.), competitive situations, whether individual or group, do not have a positive effect on their motivation in English writing, and using digital devices or colorful pictures as visual aids in their writing also seem to be less motivating.

Relationships between the scales

In order to answer the third research question, (i.e., What relationships characterize the dimensions related to English writing?), first, correlational analysis was conducted between the scales as well as the scales and the criterion measure scale. The results are presented in Tables 4 and 5 respectively.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of the scales

	Construct	Mean	Std. Deviation	
1.	Ideal L2 self	4.32	0.43	
2.	Instrumental	4.29	0.47	
3.	Topic	4.11	0.51	*
4.	Pre-writing	4.11	0.49	
5.	Intrinsic	4.02	0.51	
6.	Significant others	3.81	0.58	
7.	Competition	3.76	0.67	*
8.	Setting	3.64	0.46	
9.	Motivated learning behavior	4.41	0.50	

* The lines indicate a significant difference between the scales based on paired samples *t*-tests (*P* < 0.05).

Table 4. Correlations between the scales (*P* < 0.05)

	Ideal	Instrumental	Topic	Pre-w	Intrinsic	Sig others	Competition	Setting
1. Ideal L2 Self	–	0.691	0.482	0.395	0.405			
2. Instrumental	0.691	–	0.366	0.588				0.444
3. Topic	0.482	0.366	–	0.445	0.478	0.404		0.444
4. Pre-writing	0.395	0.588	0.445	–	0.452			0.469
5. Intrinsic	0.405		0.478	0.452	–		0.360	0.486
6. Significant others			0.404			–		
7. Competition					0.360		–	0.367
8. Setting		0.444	0.444	0.469	0.486		0.367	–

Table 5. Correlation between the Scales and Criterion Measure Scale (Motivated Learning Behavior [MLB]) ($P < 0.05$)

	Ideal	instrumental	Topic	Pre-w	Intrinsic	Sig others	Competition	Setting
mlb	0.495	0.392			0.573			0.425

As we can see in Tables 4 and 5, the highest correlations can be observed between

1. ideal L2 self and instrumental motivation (0.691),
2. instrumental motivation and pre-writing (0.588),
3. motivated learning behavior and intrinsic motivation (0.573),
4. motivated learning behavior and ideal L2 self (0.495),
5. setting and intrinsic motivation (0.486).

The two strongest correlations were found between the ideal L2 self and instrumental motivation (0.691) and between pre-writing activities and instrumental motivation (0.588), and the Fisher r to z transformation showed that these two correlation coefficients were not statistically different ($P = 0.34$). The former value shows that if the instrumental motivation of pre-service teachers in the Myanmar context is high, they also seem to be motivated by their ideal L2 selves. This result implies that there is a connection between the ideal L2 self of the participants and pragmatic benefits of English writing. In other words, their ideal L2 self might have a pragmatic focus: if they visualize themselves as excellent English writers, they might associate this with advancement in their careers or financial benefits. The correlation coefficient between instrumental motivation and pre-writing activities (0.588) demonstrates that if pre-service teachers in the context are motivated instrumentally, they also seem to be motivated by their pre-writing activities. This result suggests that pre-service teachers' instrumental motivation and their pre-writing activities tap into similar dimensions: it is possible that using pre-writing activities help the participants become more skillful academic writers, and being skillful might lead to opportunities that will fulfill their academic or career goals related to pragmatic benefits.

The moderate correlation result between intrinsic motivation and motivated learning behaviour (0.573) shows if the intrinsic motivation of pre-service teachers in the Myanmar context is high, they also seem to be motivated in their learning behavior. The result implies that there is a relationship between pre-service teachers' intrinsic motivation and their motivated learning behavior: those participants who enjoy English writing to possess a motivated behavior towards English writing in general.

As regards the correlation coefficient between motivated learning behaviour and the ideal L2 self (0.495) (which is not significantly lower [$P = 0.56$] than the correlation coefficient between motivated learning behaviour and intrinsic motivation) the result indicates that if the motivated learning behavior of pre-service teachers in the Myanmar context is high, they also seem to be motivated by their ideal L2 selves. This result might imply that those who are motivated by their ideal future selves, might find it important to make efforts in writing in general, because they may be ambitious to be skillful academic writers in the future as being skillful can support them to realize their ideal future selves in their teaching career. Finally, the moderate correlation (0.486) between the intrinsic motivation of the pre-service teachers in the Myanmar context and the setting might suggest that the pre-service teachers might consider that they can be intrinsically motivated to write if they have favorable settings in the EFL writing class.

Linear regression

In order to be able to answer research question 4 "Which dimensions of English writing contribute most to the motivated learning behavior of pre-service teachers in the context?", linear regression analysis was carried out, the results of which are presented in Table 6.

The results of the regression analysis show that 41% of the motivated learning behavior of the participants can be explained by the two dimensions – intrinsic motivation and ideal L2 self. When comparing the β coefficients of the two scales, it can be seen that the impact of intrinsic motivation (0.446) is stronger than that of the ideal L2 self (0.314) in the equation, and hence, it may be concluded that intrinsic motivation plays a more vital role in motivating the participants of pre-service teachers in the present pilot study. Ryan and Deci (2020) on the importance of intrinsic motivation shared the following idea:

> the benefits of intrinsic motivation are also obvious within formal education. For example, a meta-analysis by Taylor et al. (2014) pointed to a significant role of intrinsic motivation in school achievement. Taylor et al. followed this meta-analysis with additional studies of high school and college students in Canada and Sweden, showing that intrinsic motivation was consistently associated with higher performance, controlling for baseline achievement. (p. 2)

Ryan and Deci's claim on intrinsic motivation has been confirmed by the results of the present pilot study as well, in as much as intrinsic motivation had a positive impact on pre-service teachers' motivated learning behavior in the context, which can result in higher performance in their English writing tasks. Additionally, this result also corroborates Ryan's (2009) results of his nationwide empirical,

Table 6. Results of regression analysis of the motivational scales with motivated learning behaviour as the criterion variable (significance level $P < 0.05$)

Variable	β	t	P
1. Intrinsic motivation	0.446	3.797	<0.001
2. Ideal L2 self	0.314	2.673	<0.001
R^2			0.411
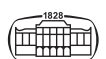
quantitative study on English major students in Japanese universities proving that "the ideal L2 self works best as a predictor of motivated behavior in cases where language is regarded as a means of personal fulfillment and engagement with others" (p. 135).

CONCLUSION

This paper presented the development of a quantitative questionnaire survey aiming to reveal whether the constructs of the pilot questionnaire are reliable; what characterizes Myanmar EFL pre-service teachers' motivational disposition in their English writing activities; what relationships characterize the dimensions related to English writing, and finally; which dimensions related to English writing contribute the most to the motivated learning behavior of the pre-service teachers. The validation process shed light on the fact that while the internal reliability of some of the scales could be improved by principal component analysis, some scales had to be removed from further analysis due to their low Cronbach's alpha coefficients. As regards the comparative importance of the dimensions in the motivational disposition of pre-service teachers in the English writing process, the findings confirmed that out of the eight dimensions measured in the study, pre-service teachers' ideal L2 selves and instrumental motivation proved to be statistically equally important, and these scales yielded the highest mean values in the participants' motivational disposition in English writing in the Myanmar context. Furthermore, the findings also verified that pre-service teachers' intrinsic motivation, and their ideal L2 selves contribute most to their motivated learning behavior in English writing.

The results pertaining to the importance of the ideal L2 self and instrumental motivation in the participants' disposition imply that they have a strong willingness to improve their writing since they realize that improving writing skills is very important to them, they believe that they will be successful in their studies if they can write well, and they wish to write very well because being a skillful writer conveys achievements for them not only in English but also in other subjects. If they can write very well, they will gain practical benefits in their academic life such as passing examinations, achieving better grades in other subjects, getting opportunities to study abroad and/or getting a scholarship.

The statistical data reveal that pre-service teachers' intrinsic motivation, and their ideal L2 selves contribute most to their motivated learning behavior in English writing. Therefore, it is very important for teachers to create an atmosphere that enhances pre-service teachers' intrinsic motivation by making them enjoy their writing activities and improve their writing skills through this favorable atmosphere in the writing class. Similarly, as pre-service teachers' motivated learning behavior is impacted by their ideal L2 selves, teach trainers should do their best to activate images of the pre-service teachers' ideal selves.

One of the limitations of the study is that it focused on the Myanmar context, the results cannot be generalized to other contexts. Further research may be needed in different contexts, for example, in the European context to find out whether the results obtained in this study are peculiar to the Myanmar context or can be transferred in a geographically broader sense. Moreover, conducting similar research in different contexts may yield invaluable findings which may be beneficial for those conducting research in the areas of ESL/EFL motivation and teaching writing in teacher training universities.

After fine-tuning the scales in the study based on the pilot results, the questionnaire will be administered on a bigger scale for the main study, followed up by a qualitative semi-structured interview study. The results of the follow-up study will hopefully enable the author to elicit the prospective participants' views on the interesting findings that the analysis of the quantitative data might possibly yield. In this way, hopefully, a more comprehensive insight will be gained into which dimensions of the process writing motivate pre-service EFL teachers the most. In turn, hopefully, the results and findings of both this pilot study and the continuing main study will yield invaluable insights for researchers and practitioners as well as curriculum developers and policy makers that could be beneficial for EFL pre-service teachers and teacher trainers in the field of teaching English writing in the teacher education profession.

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