



Review

# Motivational Impacts of the Google Docs Integration to Support Collaborative Writing: A Review Approach

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**Abstract:** In recent decades, various digital technology tools such as Google Docs, wikis, and other collaborative writing platforms have shifted the writing perspectives from product-based to process-based writing. Motivation is a crucial component in developing learners' writing skills. It is not feasible to study if one lacks motivation. Therefore, the function of motivation in student learning is crucial to ensure effective writing among students. This paper presents a review of the current trends in the integration of Google Docs in collaborative writing. The review includes critical and analytical discussions on the motivational impact of using Google Docs to support collaborative writing. This study employed content analysis as a data analysis method. The findings show that Google Docs is beneficial to creating a supportive and motivating learning environment for learners. This paper suggests that more studies should be conducted to comprehensively explore the integration of Google Docs in collaborative writing in terms of learning outcomes and attitudes, particularly in the Malaysian higher education setting. Furthermore, examining studies on teachers' attitudes toward collaborative writing and Google Docs integration is highly advised.

**Keywords:** motivation; collaboration; writing; google docs; a review approach.



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## 1. Introduction

Before the acceptance of online collaborative writing, the activity was perceived as solitary. However, this perception has evolved in recent decades because of the advent of various digital technology tools such as Google Docs, wikis, and other collaborative writing platforms. Interestingly, online collaborative writing shifts perspectives from product-based to process-based writing (Ardiasih & Rasyid, 2019). Several steps of process-based writing should be conducted regularly, permitting the writer to maintain a consistent cycle of writing, such as creating ideas, structuring, drafting, reviewing, concentrating, and evaluating. Furthermore, in collaborative writing, students are required to optimize their writing tasks by submitting multiple drafts and getting comments from the lecturer, fellow peers, or automated systems.

Motivation is a crucial component in developing learners' writing skills. It is not feasible to study if one lacks motivation. Therefore, the function of motivation in student learning is crucial to ensure effective writing among students. In other words, they may complete any activity and attain their objectives due to motivation in learning. Motivation accelerates efforts and motivates people to go to great lengths to attain a goal. Learning performance improves with motivation (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2004). It gives learners energy and helps them complete tasks because they have a goal in mind, improving learner performance. Motivation has a positive impact on student achievement in education. The goal's motivation is a high or low aspect. As a result, effective strategies for developing students' writing skills are required. Collaborative writing is often used as an alternative to improve students' writing skills. About the issue highlighted, students should have an engaging learning experience, particularly when it comes to writing.

Bakar & Som (2016) supports the analysis of participation in social and collaborative activity where participants work towards social goals within a view of learning based on a cultural and collective foundation. Google Docs is one of the tools that teachers may use to engage learners in their writing. It is due to the features in Google Docs that enable its users to collaborate in their writing where all the learning in one class can actively produce good writing (Alkhataba et al., 2018). This study aims to understand the current trends in integrating Google Docs in collaborative writing. The review includes critical and analytical discussions on the motivational impact of using Google Docs to support collaborative writing.

## 2. Literature Review

Many experts describe motivation differently. Dörnyei (2020) defines motivation as an internal drive that pushes someone to follow a form of action. Students are tremendously driven to do whatever it takes to achieve their objectives. A highly motivated language student may comprehend a wide range of objectives. Motivation can also be characterized as the process of initiating, directing, and maintaining goal-oriented action. Motivation propels us to act, whether drinking a glass of water to quench our thirst or reading a book to learn something new. Meanwhile, Brown & Abeywickrama (2004) refers to motivation as the acts where one does his/her best when making his/her own decisions, whether it affects his/her short-term or long-term goals. Motivation is essential in the language learning process. Motivation could also be considered a self-regulator that fosters a willingness to learn (Lamb, 2017). Students with a high degree of motivation outperform unmotivated students. On the other hand, students with a low degree of motivation may develop their writing skills.

Motivated learners must encourage themselves to practice and become accustomed to writing in English to enhance their writing skills. Also, motivation help learners to pay greater attention to the subject material. Motivated students are better prepared for teaching and learning (Suwantarathip & Wichadee, 2014). Therefore, students can even simply grasp the topic whilst learning to write and improve their writing skills during their leisure time. Enjoying themselves enables students to be happy when doing the writing activity. It is because students with high motivation are most likely to succeed in writing skills. They can pay attention to how the teacher writes words and learning materials. When the teacher gives examples of words, they pay attention to the written word. They eagerly ask the teacher to repeat the words whenever they encounter difficulties understanding the knowledge better.

## 3. Materials and Methods

In order to select appropriate studies for this literature review paper, the author searched Google Scholar, Science Direct, and ProQuest for relevant journal articles published during the previous decade. More specifically, the author ran an advanced search on Google Scholar. The search terms were Google Docs, Writing, Writing Instruction, Collaborative Writing, Collaborative Learning, and Motivation, with publication dates ranging from 2016 to 2022. Since the emphasis of this study is writing, the researcher chose sources that focused primarily on writing education using technology rather than studies that evaluated other academic skills. The author assessed all the papers based on titles and abstracts. The selection of articles is the following criteria: research published in reputable peer-reviewed publications and (2) an authentic, collaborative writing activity that used the Google Docs application and involved collaboration in writing tasks.

### 3.1. Data Analysis

In reviewing the articles, this study employed content analysis to review the findings about using Google Docs to motivate learners to write collaboratively. Data are analyzed following thematic coding. Themes are formulated after the researchers read the ten articles and carefully extract findings from the previous research to answer the formulated research.

### 3.2. Data Source

Ten (10) articles were chosen for analysis after the screening, as shown in Table 1. Several articles were selected because some studies were review papers, not published in English, and not accessible. Furthermore, after reviewing the abstracts and examining them, it was found that some studies worked on multiple Web-based collaborative tools in collaborative writing, which were not specified to the use of Google Docs as a collaborative tool.

**Table 1.** Previous studies on the integration of Google Docs in writing

Author & Year	Source	Data Collected	Samples	Findings	Country
Liu & Lan (2016)	Educational Technology & Society,	Vocabulary tests, questionnaire	64 EFL students	Students were motivated to acquire knowledge, and their performance improved	Taiwan
Al-Chibani (2016)	Proceedings of the International Conference on Information Communication Technologies in Education	Case study	25 undergraduate students	By introducing Google Docs, there was a great impact on the students' motivation, writing skills, and attitude towards the English language in general. Google Docs help students motivate to develop their English academic writing skills and	Lebanon
Jeong (2016)	Indian Journal of Science and Technology	Questionnaire, Semi-structured interview	20 college students	provide them with more meaningful and collaborative classroom interaction	Korea
Woodrich & Fan (2017)	Journal of Information Technology Education	Face-to-face, online, and anonymous writing activities, a rubric, and a survey questionnaires, written tasks, students' portfolio, a customized rubric for test scores, and post interviews	600 students in grades six to eight	Students enjoyed working on Google Docs and participated actively in group discussion	USA
Alsubaie & Ashuraidah (2017)	English Language Teaching		22 female university students	Google Docs online learning environment encouraged the students, and they felt more confident to focus on the given topic and concentrate more in explaining their ideas. Students improved their editing and revision of texts in a motivating environment.	Saudi Arabia
Mudawe (2018)	Journal of Applied Linguistics and Language Research	Semi-structured interview	Six students	Google Docs has encouraged creativity, communication, and knowledge sharing among students.	Saudi Arabia
Sudrajat & Purnawarman (2019)	Lingua Cultura	Questionnaire	15 university students	Students were more engaged with their lessons when Google Docs was used, and the students	Indonesia
Faulkner (2019)	Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies	Interview and focus group discussion	Two teachers and 17 students		USA

Alharbi (2020)	Innovation in language learning and teaching	Case study	10 university students	reported enjoying working together to complete assignments rather than working independently. Students had positive attitudes towards using Google Docs	Saudi Arabia
Akoto (2021)	Languages	Questionnaire survey and semi-structured interviews	Seven French FL learners (four females and three males)	Creating a digital multimodal text collaboratively via Google Docs engaged and motivated French FL learners to write more than they generally would. Google Docs played a significant role in promoting learners' motivation and involvement in learning second language writing.	USA
Aldossary (2022)	International Journal of English Linguistics	Questionnaire	164 Saudi EFL students		Saudi Arabia

#### 4. Results and Discussion

In this study, the author extensively evaluated 10 pieces of research and summarized the findings regarding the impacts of Google Docs on students' writing motivation using an illustrated table. The author's goal is to present a good overview of the existing literature by displaying extensive research on this issue. According to Dörnyei (2020), the notion of motivation is directly related to engagement, and motivation must be provided to establish student involvement. Google Docs has fostered student creativity, communication, and information exchange (Sudrajat & Purnawarman, 2019; Woodrich & Fan, 2017). Users may communicate while maintaining ownership of their work courtesy of the capabilities of comments, track changes, and recommendations (Ebener, 2017). Google users participate in genuine group activities by changing documents synchronously and asynchronously, with changes immediately stored and readily monitored. Findings revealed many positive effects on students' motivation after using Google Docs in collaborative writing. The use of Google Docs boosts students' motivation as they collaborate with their friends due to four factors: (i) Google Docs enables students to receive feedback instantly from the teacher while working on their essays. (ii) Google Docs allows students to communicate synchronously while working on their essays. (iii) Google Docs promotes meaningful learning among students, and (iv) Google Docs permits editing and rewriting instantaneously.

##### 4.1. Google Docs Enables Students to Receive Feedback Instantly from the Teacher while Working on Their Essays

Faulkner (2019) examined the impact of using Google Docs on enhancing secondary technical school students' collaboration, interpersonal interaction, and writing. Many students rarely read the teacher's comments and suggestions after their graded and revised papers. However, using Google Docs allows these students to notice the teacher's feedback easily and respond to their teacher on the spot if they are having difficulty understanding them. Moreover, Alharbi (2020) employed Google Docs with ten Saudi university students in his qualitative case study. He discovered that Google Docs provided micro and macro feedback from instructors and peers through observations, assessing students' comments and edits, and conducting interviews. The content analysis of students' comments revealed various feedback types provided by peers and teachers. Similarly, Akoto (2021) used Google Docs in collaborative multimodal writing in a French FL class. The test result showed that creating a digital multimodal text collaboratively via Google Docs engaged and motivated French FL learners to write more than they generally would. Therefore, utilizing Google Docs to give feedback and collaborate with students helps students and teachers stay motivated in language learning.

##### 4.2. Google Docs Allows Students to Communicate Synchronously While Working on their Essay

Liu & Lan (2016) investigated students' collaboration, motivation, and perception of using Google Docs. Their results indicate that collaborators who performed better in their writing were more likely to be motivated to acquire knowledge and perceived the learning experience more positively than individuals. In Lebanon, Al-Chibani (2016)

discovered that introducing Google Docs significantly influenced students' engagement, writing abilities, and attitude toward the English language in general. Aldossary (2022) examined students' perceptions of using Google Docs as a supplementary learning platform for writing instruction and interaction with teachers and peers. The results revealed that participants found Google Docs to be useful and intriguing. They also suggested that Google Docs may be used to create a collaborative learning environment. Their use stimulated student-teacher and student-student interactions, helped students improve their general writing abilities, and fostered productive peer-to-peer interactions. Google Docs features are convenient for collaborative writing. Individual learners' contributions are assigned different colours, which remain steady within each group throughout the writing process (Abrams, 2019), which is very important. According to the findings, Google Docs is important in increasing learners' motivation and participation in second language writing acquisition.

### 4.3. Google Docs Promotes Meaningful Learning among Students

Jeong (2016) conducted a study in Korea using Google Docs in writing collaboratively. The study claimed that Google Docs enhanced students' motivation to develop their English academic writing skills and provided them with more meaningful and collaborative classroom interaction. It is in line with the study by Woodrich & Fan (2017), who stated that students enjoyed working on Google Docs and participated actively in group discussions compared to traditional instructional materials. In Saudi Arabia, Alsubaie & Ashuraidah (2017) conducted a study to examine the distinctions between students' individual and collaborative work with Google Docs and to determine students' attitudes regarding cooperative learning with Google Docs on English writing assignments. The study found that an online learning environment via Google Docs motivated students, and they felt more confident in concentrating on the subject and focusing solely on expressing their thoughts. Hence, integrating Google Docs as a collaborative tool for writing tasks can create a supportive and engaging learning environment for learners.

### 4.4. Google Docs Permits Editing and Rewriting Instantaneously

In Saudi Arabia, Mudawe (2018) explored Google Docs' educational capabilities as a collaborative tool for improving EFL and ESL students' writing. He discovered that Google Docs improves students' editing and rewriting of writings in a motivating setting and that Google Docs expands the possibilities for contact between students and their supervisors. Furthermore, Google Docs fostered student creativity, communication, and information exchange (Sudrajat & Purnawarman, 2019). According to Abrams (2019), during the initial stages, instructions can emphasize the idea of free writing to generate ideas and engagement. So, students can be told from the beginning that they will have an opportunity to revise their work and improve accuracy at later stages. A multi-stage process can encourage learners that increasing fluency will not come at the expense of accuracy. In general, learners held positive perceptions of the use of Google Docs. Thus, Google Docs has demonstrated significant pedagogical capability in English language learning, as students have considered Google Docs to have an overwhelmingly beneficial influence on their learning.

## 5. Conclusions

In conclusion, this study identified that the use of Google Docs certainly affects students' motivation in a positive way. Students can receive feedback from their teacher instantly while doing writing tasks. Plus, they can synchronously interact with the teacher and peers via Google Docs. Instead, Google Docs enable students to edit and rewrite their work whilst providing a meaningful and supportive learning environment to keep students feel motivated to learn a language. The authors recommend the integration of Google Docs in other language skills, where teachers and instructors must carefully construct language learning materials that are interesting, effective, and highly relevant to the course objectives. Furthermore, the researcher proposes using technology-based teaching in school because several studies have proved its validity in improving learners' individual writing and the learning environment in general. With the findings derived from previous studies, future research could further investigate the use of Google Docs in their writing class, particularly looking at the state-of-the-art communication that can be promoted using the platform. Also, further research can be conducted to examine the level of enthusiasm among students when using Google Docs. Due to the advancement of technological tools, research on collaborative learning technologies is expected to expand in the future decade. Consequently, it is suggested that more studies should be conducted to comprehensively explore the integration of Google Docs in collaborative writing in terms of learning outcomes and attitudes, particularly papers that explored it in the Malaysian higher education setting. Furthermore, examining studies on teachers' attitudes toward collaborative writing and Google Docs integration is highly advised.

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