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Unlocking University Students' Perceptions: What Defines Effective EFL Writing Instructors in the Digital Age

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to investigate university students' perceptions of the essential qualities of effective EFL writing instructors in the digital age. Data were collected from 134 students through a structured Likert-scale questionnaire. Descriptive statistical analysis, containing mean and standard deviation, was employed to analyze the data regarding five main qualities: pedagogical competence, linguistic competence, interpersonal skills, motivational strategies, and adaptability to technology. The results showed that students highly appreciate clear and constructive feedback, diverse instructional approaches, and incorporation of digital resources. Linguistic competence, including explicit grammar instruction and effective modeling of writing techniques, is also considered essential. Additionally, strong interpersonal skills contribute to a supportive learning environment, while motivational strategies, including acknowledging students' progress and achievement, help maintain engagement. Adaptability to technology is crucial, as students value instructors who integrate digital tools and enhance feedback through technology. The most significant quality that students identified was linguistic competence dealing with the instructors' ability to articulate grammar, coherence, and rhetorical structures with precision. Interpersonal skills were also highly rated, emphasizing the importance of a positive classroom environment and personalized assistance. Effective feedback delivery and instructional variation were facilitated by pedagogical competence, while motivational strategies were essential for maintaining engagement through the progress recognition. Finally, the significance of incorporating digital tools into writing instruction was underscored by the necessity of technological advancements adaptation. The results of the present study highlight the need for training programs that blend digital and interpersonal skills. Future studies should examine how these qualities directly impact student writing outcomes.

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1. Introduction

Writing is widely recognized as one of the most challenging and cognitively demanding skills in learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL)[1, 2]. Unlike spoken communication, which allows for immediate clarification and feedback, writing requires a deeper understanding of linguistic structures, coherence, organization, and audience expectations. Consequently, EFL writing instructors play a crucial role in equipping students with the necessary skills to articulate their ideas clearly and effectively. Beyond teaching grammar and vocabulary, effective writing instructors foster students' confidence, motivation, and autonomy by employing a range of pedagogical strategies[3, 4]. Their responsibilities extend to cultivating critical thinking, creativity, and engagement with diverse discourse communities, enhancing students' ability to communicate meaningfully in academic and professional contexts[5].

Traditionally, EFL writing instruction has been grounded in process product-based approaches, emphasizing drafting, revision, and the finalization of written texts[6, 7]. However, the rapid advancement of digital technology has profoundly reshaped writing pedagogy, necessitating a reconsideration of conventional teaching methods[8]. The integration of online platforms, artificial intelligence (AI) assisted tools, and collaborative writing applications has revolutionized how students compose and refine their texts[9]. While these digital innovations provide opportunities for interactive and personalized learning, they also present challenges for instructors, who must adapt their pedagogical strategies to effectively integrate technology into writing instruction[10]. In this evolving landscape, preparing students to navigate academic and professional writing requires a redefinition of instructional best practices that align with technological advancements.

In the Indonesian higher education context, EFL writing instruction faces persistent challenges. Many students struggle with academic writing due to limited exposure to English outside the classroom, insufficient writing practice, and an overemphasis on grammatical accuracy at the expense of idea development[11, 12]. Additionally, difficulties in mastering grammar, vocabulary, and academic writing conventions often hinder students' ability to produce coherent and well-structured texts[13]. The increasing reliance on automated writing tools, such as grammar checkers and translation software, has further raised concerns regarding originality, critical thinking, and independent writing skills[14]. To address these challenges, EFL writing instructors must possess strong pedagogical expertise and demonstrate the ability to leverage digital tools effectively while fostering students' critical engagement with technology. Identifying the key characteristics and instructional practices of effective EFL writing instructors in the digital era is thus essential for enhancing writing pedagogy and improving student outcomes.

Previous research has explored various aspects of teacher effectiveness in EFL instruction[15, 16], with some studies explicitly examining the qualities of effective EFL writing instructors[17, 18]. Other studies have investigated the integration of digital tools in writing instruction[19, 20], and the role of a supportive learning environment in mitigating writing anxiety and fostering student confidence[21–23]. While qualitative studies have provided insights into instructors' effectiveness in EFL writing instruction[24, 25], research concerning students' perceptions of effective writing instructors, particularly in digital technology, remains limited. Given the growing influence of digital tools in language learning, investigating students' perspectives on what constitutes an effective EFL writing instructor in the digital era is crucial for informing pedagogical practices and optimizing learning experiences.

This study sought to explore University students' perceptions of the qualities of effective EFL writing instructors in the digital age. By examining students' perspectives, this research aimed to provide valuable insights into contemporary writing pedagogy, ultimately contributing to developing more effective teaching approaches that align with the evolving demands of digital learning environments. Therefore, this study was intended to deal with the following questions:

What are students' perceptions regarding effective EFL writing instructors in the digital age?

What qualities do students perceive as the most impactful for their writing learning experience?

2. Literature Review

2.1. EFL Writing Instruction in the Digital Age

The rapid advancement of digital technology has significantly transformed EFL writing instruction, reshaping pedagogical approaches, instructional strategies, and student engagement. Traditional methods primarily relying on face-to-face instruction and paper-based writing exercises are now complemented by digital platforms, collaborative writing tools, and AI-assisted feedback systems [26, 27]. These technological advancements have not only enhanced accessibility to authentic language input but also facilitated more interactive and personalized learning experiences. Digital writing tools such as Google Docs, Grammarly, and automated essay scoring systems provide immediate feedback, allowing learners to refine their writing skills in real time [28]. Moreover, online learning management systems (LMS) and discussion forums promote peer collaboration and instructor guidance beyond the physical classroom [29]. However, while digital technology offers substantial benefits, its integration into EFL writing instruction also presents challenges, including students' varying levels of digital literacy, concerns regarding academic integrity, and the potential for over-reliance on automated tools at the expense of critical thinking and creativity [30]. As a result, EFL writing instructors must adopt a balanced approach that integrates technological innovations while fostering essential writing skills, originality, and self-directed learning [31]. Practical instruction in the digital era requires technological proficiency and a deep understanding of pedagogical frameworks that encourage meaningful engagement, scaffolded learning, and the development of students' metacognitive writing strategies [32].

2.2. Learners' General Perspectives on Effective EFL Instructors

The effectiveness of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instructors is a key focus in second language acquisition (SLA) research, particularly from the learners' perspective [33]. As primary recipients of instruction, learners provide valuable insights into the qualities that define an effective teacher [34], which are shaped by educational, sociocultural, and technological factors [35]. While perceptions of effectiveness vary across contexts, core attributes consis-

tently identified in the literature include pedagogical competence, linguistic competence, interpersonal skills, motivational strategies, and adaptability to technology [36]. Pedagogical competence enables instructors to design and implement student-centred methodologies like communicative language teaching (CLT) and task-based learning (TBL), which enhance engagement and learning outcomes [37, 38]. Linguistic proficiency is equally crucial, as students rely on instructors as language models, benefiting from their accuracy in pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary [39]. However, strong interpersonal skills are essential for building rapport, fostering a supportive environment, and reducing language anxiety [40]. Beyond technical expertise, effective instructors use motivational strategies such as setting clear goals, providing constructive feedback, and incorporating engaging materials to sustain student interest [41]. Technological adaptability has become increasingly relevant in today's digital landscape, with digital tools enhancing accessibility, fostering learner autonomy, and catering to diverse learning preferences [4]. These attributes collectively contribute to language proficiency, engagement, and independence. However, the emphasis on each may vary across educational settings, highlighting the need for further research on culturally specific perceptions of EFL instructor effectiveness.

2.3. Qualities of Effective EFL Writing Instructors in the Digital Age

Integrating digital technology into writing instruction has fundamentally reshaped the essential qualities of effective EFL writing instructors, necessitating a harmonious balance between technological adaptability and pedagogical expertise [42]. In the digital age, EFL writing instructors must possess a multifaceted skill set that enables them to integrate advanced technologies seamlessly into their teaching practices while enhancing students' writing proficiency [43]. This dual focus demands a profound understanding of writing instruction and a mastery of technology-enhanced pedagogy to design dynamic and impactful learning experiences [44]. They should also focus on prioritizing practical writing skills over purely theoretical approaches, advocating for the use of differentiated instruction strategies to cater to the diverse needs of learners [45]. Equally vital is creating an inclusive and supportive classroom environment that fosters active student participation and collaboration [46]. Beyond fostering engage-

ment, effective instructors must cultivate learner autonomy, equipping students with the confidence and skills to develop and refine their writing abilities independently[47]. Furthermore, instructors must demonstrate agility in adapting lesson plans, revising assessment methods, and addressing the complexities of remote or hybrid learning environments[48]. Understanding these evolving roles and competencies is critical for optimizing EFL writing instruction and preparing students for academic and professional success in an increasingly digitized world[49].

2.4. Previous Studies on EFL Writing Instruction

Studies exploring the characteristics of effective English language instructors have been conducted across diverse contexts, providing valuable insights into the qualities that define successful educators[50]. For instance, Carmel and Badash investigated early-career English instructors' perceptions of effective EFL instructors[51], identifying key attributes such as motivation, enthusiasm, and self-confidence. Similarly, Yuan and Hu examined the perspectives of pre- and in-service instructors in China, revealing that effective teacher educators are perceived as 'fountains of knowledge' who provide academic and emotional support[52]. These studies underscore the importance of personal and pedagogical skills in shaping students' perceptions of effective teaching.

In recent years, research has expanded to explore EFL instructors' evolving role in digital technology[53]. Hung investigated University students' perspectives on effective EFL teaching in Vietnam[54], emphasizing the importance of English proficiency, pedagogical knowledge, and socio-affective skills. Additionally, Ostovar-Namaghi and Hosseini explored recruitment criteria for EFL instructors[55], highlighting the need for professional experience, classroom management skills, and mastery of language instruction. These studies highlight how expectations of EFL instructors are shifting in response to new educational demands.

Studies have also highlighted the importance of integrating digital tools into EFL instruction in the Indonesian context. Rohmah examined the role of professional development and mentoring programs, finding that continuous training improves EFL instructors' ability to implement effective teaching strategies[56]. Similarly, Quan emphasized that Vietnamese students and instructors consider subject knowledge

and instructional clarity essential to effective instructors[57]. Furthermore, Chu et al. explored the professional qualities of excellent EFL instructors in China, identifying key dimensions such as pedagogical competence, professional ethics, and beliefs about lifelong learning[58].

However, with the rapid integration of digital technologies into EFL writing instruction, the qualities of effective instructors have evolved. Recent studies have begun to explore how digital tools influence teaching practices and student perceptions. For example, Richards examined the relationship between English proficiency and effective teaching, arguing that high language proficiency enhances instructional delivery[59]. Meanwhile, Farooq evaluated professional development programs for EFL instructors[60], concluding that continuous learning is essential for effective teaching practices. These studies reflect the evolving competencies required for effective EFL instruction in contemporary educational settings.

Despite these contributions, a critical gap remains in understanding how university students in Indonesia perceive the qualities of effective EFL writing instructors in the age of digital technology. While existing studies have explored the integration of digital tools and the evolving skill sets required of instructors, however there is limited research on how these factors shape students' expectations and preferences in the context of EFL writing instruction. Specifically, the interplay between technological adaptability, pedagogical expertise, and interpersonal skills in defining effective teaching remains underexplored in the Indonesian higher education context. To address this issue, the current study aims to provide theoretically nuanced insights into the qualities that University students value most in EFL writing instructors within digital learning environments. By examining students' perceptions through a quantitative lens, this research seeks to identify key trends, patterns, and empirically grounded insights that can inform the development of teacher training programs and pedagogical strategies tailored to the needs of digital-age learners.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

This study employed a survey research design to analyze University students' perceptions of the qualities that

define effective EFL writing instructors in the digital era. It also examined students' views on the impactful qualities influencing their writing experiences. Data were collected using a standardized Likert-scale questionnaire addressing the study's primary research questions. This quantitative design identified trends, patterns, and variations in students' perceptions, offering valuable insights into EFL writing instructors' most highly regarded characteristics in the digital age. The research protocol was reviewed and approved by the Research Center of the State Islamic University of Mataram prior to commencement.

3.2. Participants

This study involved 134 undergraduate students from a higher education institution in western Indonesia who had enrolled in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) writing classes. The participants were drawn from the English education program's fourth, sixth, and eighth semesters. They were selected through stratified random sampling to ensure diverse experiences and perceptions were adequately represented, enhancing the generalizability of the findings. Participants completed a detailed questionnaire to assess numerous variables related to the research objectives. The collected data were then subject to a thorough quantitative analysis, allowing for precise identification of the primary research questions examined in this study (see **Table 1**).

Table 1. Participants' Demographics.

Criteria	Category	Frequency
Sex	Male	55
	Female	79
Semester	4	32
	6	65
	8	38

3.3. Instrument of Research

The primary instrument used in this study was a closed-ended questionnaire with a Likert scale designed to measure students' perceptions of the qualities that define effective EFL writing instructors in the digital age. The questionnaire was distributed online via Google Forms and shared voluntarily with students through their class WhatsApp groups. The questionnaire was presented in both Indonesian and English to ensure respondents fully under-

stood each item. The questionnaire addressed five fundamental qualities of instructor effectiveness: pedagogical competence, linguistic competence, interpersonal skills, motivational strategies, and adaptability to technology. Pedagogical competence assesses instructors' ability to effectively design, implement, and evaluate writing instruction. Linguistic competence focuses on instructors' proficiency in using digital tools and platforms to support writing instruction. Interpersonal skills measure instructors' ability to create a supportive and engaging learning environment. Motivational strategies were evaluated for instructors' capacity to inspire and encourage students in writing. Lastly, adaptability to technology reflected instructors' ability to integrate digital tools and online platforms into writing instruction. Each item was rated on a five-point Likert scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Undecided, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree. The questionnaire was developed by the researchers and evaluated for content validity by experts in English language teaching and educational research methods to confirm accuracy and dependability. Construct validity was also ensured through confirmatory factor analysis to measure the consistency of items with the underlying construct and alignment with the theoretical ideas. Additionally, a reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha was conducted to assess the internal consistency of the questionnaire items before their implementation in the field. Cronbach's alpha is 0.978, signifying exceptional internal consistency. The questionnaire items consistently assess the same fundamental concept of perceptions of proficient English writing instructors.

3.4. Data Collection Technique

Data for this study were collected through a questionnaire distributed to university students who had previously taken academic writing courses in an EFL setting. The questionnaire consisted of 30 statement items and was divided into five sections: the first contained eight statements, the second included five, the third had six, the fourth also included five, and the fifth comprised six. All statements were structured using a graded Likert scale, with responses ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. The survey was administered via Google Forms, enabling the researcher to reach more respondents and streamline data processing efficiently. Participants were requested to evaluate their per-

ceptions of the attributes that belong to each quality that defines effective EFL writing instructors. The collected data provided valuable insights into students' perceptions of the qualities of effective EFL writing instructors in the digital age, highlighting trends, preferences, and potential areas for instructional improvement.

3.5. Data Analysis

Data collected from the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistical methods to identify trends, patterns, and relationships in students' perceptions of effective EFL writing instructors. Measures such as means and standard deviations were used to summarize central tendencies and variations of response across all items. This analysis provided a comprehensive overview of students' perspectives on different aspects of instructor effectiveness in digital EFL writing instruction. Additionally, the descriptive findings served as a basis for understanding the importance of various instructors' qualities and instructional practices.

4. Results

The following results are based on responses from the questionnaire, which include students' perceptions regarding an effective writing instructor in the digital age and the qualities that the students perceive as the most impactful for their writing learning experience.

4.1. Students' Perceptions Regarding Effective Writing Instructors in the Digital Age

To assess students' perceptions of this aspect, five key qualities were examined: pedagogical competence, linguistic competence, interpersonal skills, motivational strategies, and adaptability to technology. The descriptive statistical results, including mean and standard deviation for each indicator, are as follows.

Regarding pedagogical competence, the findings indicated that the students perceived effective EFL writing instructors as those who employ diverse pedagogical strategies to support their writing development in the digital age. The highest-rated aspect emphasizes providing clear and constructive feedback (M = 4.11, SD = 0.77), suggesting that students highly value explicit guidance in improving their

writing proficiency. Similarly, integrating real-world examples, authentic materials, and digital resources (M = 4.06, SD = 0.80) and employing varied instructional strategies (M = 4.06, SD = 0.85) was considered essential for addressing students' diverse needs and enhancing engagement. Additionally, the ability to guide students in organizing ideas and structuring their writing effectively (M = 4.07, SD = 0.91) highlights the instructor's role in fostering coherence and cohesion in academic writing. Other vital qualities included promoting critical thinking (M = 4.03, SD = 0.79) and incorporating discourse and genre-based approaches (M = 4.00, SD = 0.85), emphasizing the need to develop students' analytical and rhetorical skills. While using multiple instructional methods (M = 3.85, SD = 0.92) received a slightly lower rating, it still reflects a consensus on its importance (see **Table 2**).

Concerning linguistic competence, it was found that students emphasized the critical role of EFL writing instructors' language proficiency in facilitating effective instruction. The highest-rated item demonstrated the significance of clear explanations of grammar, cohesion, coherence, and rhetorical structures (M = 4.17, SD = 0.76), reflecting students' preference for explicit linguistic guidance. Likewise, instructors' overall writing competence and mastery of English (M = 4.15, SD = 0.83) were seen as fundamental to ensuring high-quality instruction. A deep understanding of academic and professional writing conventions (M = 4.14, SD = 0.86) was also recognized as essential in helping students produce well-structured and contextually appropriate texts. Furthermore, the ability to model effective writing techniques (M = 4.12, SD = 0.86) reinforced the importance of instructors demonstrating strong writing skills as part of their teaching approach. The emphasis on continuous professional development (M = 4.04, SD = 0.87) indicated that students valued instructors who stay updated with evolving writing strategies and pedagogical methodologies (see **Table 3**).

When considering interpersonal skills, the findings suggested that the students regarded interpersonal skills as a crucial aspect of effective EFL writing instruction, emphasizing the role of instructor support, encouragement, and creating a positive learning environment. The highest-rated item (M = 4.14, SD = 0.86) underscored the importance of providing individualized support to students facing writing challenges, indicating that personalized guidance was highly valued in

fostering writing development. Similarly, demonstrating patience and offering consistent support throughout the writing process (M = 4.12, SD = 0.89) and fostering a welcoming classroom atmosphere (M = 4.10, SD = 0.84) emerged as essential factors for boosting student confidence and engagement. Although organizing pair work and group activities for peer feedback (M = 3.82, SD = 0.87) received a comparatively lower rating, it still reflects students' appreciation for collaborative learning opportunities. Additionally, helping students overcome negative attitudes toward writing through enjoyable and relaxed methods (M = 3.94, SD = 0.92) and promoting autonomy by fostering self-regulation strategies (M = 3.92, SD = 0.84) further highlighted the instructor's role in enhancing motivation and independence (see **Table 4**).

Table 2. Students' Perception of Instructors' Pedagogical Competence.

Items No.	Statements	M	SD
1.	Effective EFL writing instructors integrate real-world examples, authentic materials, and digital resources to enhance students' writing skills.	4.06	0.80
2.	Effective EFL writing instructors employ different instruction strategies to meet varied students' writing needs and proficiency levels.	4.06	0.85
3.	Effective EFL writing instructors guide students in creating outlines, organizing ideas, and structuring their writing effectively.	4.07	0.91
4.	Effective EFL writing instructors provide clear and constructive feedback on students' writing for optimum improvement.	4.11	0.77
5.	Effective EFL writing instructors promote critical thinking by encouraging students to analyze and evaluate their writing.	4.03	0.79
6.	Effective EFL writing instructors introduce students to the concept of discourse and diverse writing genres in an EFL context.	4.00	0.85
7.	Effective EFL writing instructors apply various methods to develop their writing instruction.	3.85	0.92
8.	Effective EFL writing instructors evaluate students' writing progress through suitable assessment techniques corresponding to digital learning contexts.	4.04	0.80

Table 3. Students' Perception of Instructors' Linguistic Competence.

Items No.	Statements	M	SD
1.	Effective EFL writing instructors integrate real-world examples, authentic materials, and digital resources to enhance students' writing skills.	4.06	0.80
2.	Effective EFL writing instructors employ different instruction strategies to meet varied students' writing needs and proficiency levels.	4.06	0.85
3.	Effective EFL writing instructors guide students in creating outlines, organizing ideas, and structuring their writing effectively.	4.07	0.91
4.	Effective EFL writing instructors provide clear and constructive feedback on students' writing for optimum improvement.	4.11	0.77
5.	Effective EFL writing instructors promote critical thinking by encouraging students to analyze and evaluate their writing.	4.03	0.79
6.	Effective EFL writing instructors introduce students to the concept of discourse and diverse writing genres in an EFL context.	4.00	0.85
7.	Effective EFL writing instructors apply various methods to develop their writing instruction.	3.85	0.92
8.	Effective EFL writing instructors evaluate students' writing progress through suitable assessment techniques corresponding to digital learning contexts.	4.04	0.80

Table 4. Students' Perception of Instructors' Interpersonal Skills.

Items No.	Statements	M	SD
14.	Effective EFL writing instructors are patient and supportive while leading students through the writing process.	4.12	0.89
15.	Effective EFL writing instructors foster a welcoming classroom atmosphere, encouraging active participation and collaboration.	4.10	0.84
16.	Effective EFL writing instructors set up pair work and group activities to promote peer feedback and cooperative learning.	3.82	0.87
17.	Effective EFL writing instructors offer individualized support to students struggling with writing challenges.	4.14	0.86
18.	Effective EFL writing instructors help students overcome negative attitudes toward writing by using enjoyable and relaxed methods.	3.94	0.92
19.	Effective EFL writing instructors encourage students to become autonomous by cultivating self-regulation and independent writing strategies.	3.92	0.84

In terms of motivational strategies, the findings indicated that the students considered motivational strategies as a crucial characteristic of effective EFL writing instructors, highlighting the importance of encouragement, engagement, and constructive feedback in fostering writing development. The highest-rated item (M = 4.13, SD = 0.83) underscored the significance of recognizing and rewarding students' progress and achievements, suggesting that positive reinforcement plays a vital role in sustaining motivation. Similarly, designing engaging and meaningful writing assignments aligned with student's interests and goals (M = 4.03, SD = 0.76) was essential for maintaining student engagement and personal investment in writing tasks. Providing prompt and constructive feedback (M = 4.01, SD = 0.79) further highlighted the importance of timely guidance in encouraging improvement and persistence. Moreover, students valued instructors prioritizing practical writing applications over purely theoretical approaches (M = 3.98, SD = 0.85), indicating a preference for real-world relevance in writing instruction. Although the use of general motivational techniques to boost students' confidence (M = 3.88, SD = 0.83) received a slightly lower rating, it still reflects an acknowledgment of the instructor's role in fostering a supportive and motivating learning environment (see **Table 5**).

Table 5. Students' Perception of Instructors' Motivation Strategies.

Items No.	Statements	M	SD
20.	Effective EFL writing instructors utilize motivational techniques to boost students' confidence in writing.	3.88	0.83
21.	Effective EFL writing instructors design engaging and meaningful writing assignments that align with students' interests and goals.	4.03	0.76
22.	Effective EFL writing instructors provide quick and constructive feedback to motivate students to improve their writing skills.	4.01	0.79
23.	Effective EFL writing instructors emphasize practical writing applications over purely theoretical approaches.	3.98	0.85
24.	Effective EFL writing instructors recognize and reward students' progress and achievements in writing.	4.13	0.83

With respect to adaptability to technology, the findings reveal that the students considered adaptability to technology a crucial trait of effective EFL writing instructors, emphasizing the integration of digital tools and platforms into writing instruction. The highest-rated item (M = 4.08, SD = 0.83) highlighted encouraging students to use technology-based writing tools like Grammarly, Google Docs, and Turnitin to enhance their writing process. This suggests students value instructors who promote digital literacy and facilitate independent learning through technological support. Additionally, the ability to utilize various digital resources to improve feedback and assessment (M = 4.02, SD = 0.73) and the commitment to continuously updating technological skills (M = 4.01, SD = 0.84) underscored the need for instructors to stay current with advancements in EFL writing pedagogy. The effective implementation of digital resources in blended and online learning environments (M = 3.97, SD = 0.78) and the integration of emerging technologies into writing instruction (M = 3.94, SD = 0.82) further highlighted the importance of technological adaptability in modern EFL classrooms. Although the use of digital writing labs and online platforms as interactive writing spaces (M = 3.85, SD = 0.96) received a slightly lower rating, it still reflects an acknowledgment of the role of digital environments in fostering student engagement (see **Table 6**).

Table 6. Students' Perception of Instructors' Adaptability to Technology.

Items No.	Statements	M	SD
25.	Effective EFL writing instructors effectively incorporate recent technologies into writing instruction.	3.94	0.82
26.	Effective EFL writing instructors use the digital writing lab and online platforms as interactive spaces for writing activities.	3.85	0.96
27.	Effective EFL writing instructors work with a variety of digital resources to provide better feedback and assessment of students' writing.	4.02	0.73
28.	Effective EFL writing instructors implement a range of digital resources to modify writing instruction for blended and online learning settings.	3.97	0.78
29.	Effective EFL writing instructors continuously update their technological skills to improve their writing instruction.	4.01	0.84
30.	Effective EFL writing instructors encourage students to use technology-based writing tools (e.g., Grammarly, Google Docs, Turnitin) to enhance their writing process.	4.08	0.83

4.2. Qualities that the Students Perceive as the Most Impactful for Their Writing Learning Experience

To find the most impactful qualities for students' writing learning experiences, this study ranked the main attributes of the qualities based on their respective scores, from highest to lowest (**Table 7**). This ranking provides insight into the contribution of each quality in shaping effective writing instruction.

The results of descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation for each quality, indicate that linguistic competence is perceived as the most impactful quality,

with instructors' ability to deliver clear explanations of grammar, cohesion, and rhetorical structures receiving the highest mean score (M = 4.17, SD = 0.76). This is followed by interpersonal skills (M = 4.14, SD = 0.86), highlighting the importance of individualized support in addressing students' writing challenges. Motivational strategies (M = 4.13, SD = 0.83) also play a crucial role in recognizing students' progress and achievements. Pedagogical competence (M = 4.11, SD = 077) ranks next, emphasizing the value of providing clear and constructive feedback. Lastly, adaptability to technology (M = 4.08, SD = 0.83) remains significant, as students appreciate the integration of digital writing tools to support their learning.

Table 7. Students' Perception of Instructors' Adaptability to Technology.

Ranking	Qualities	Indicators	M	SD
1	Linguistic Competence	Delivering clear explanations of grammar, cohesion, coherence, and rhetorical structures	4.17	0.76
2	Interpersonal Skills	Offering individualized support to students struggling with writing challenges.	4.14	0.86
3	Motivation Strategies	Recognizing and rewarding students' progress and achievements in writing	4.13	0.83
4	Pedagogical Competence	Providing clear and constructive feedback on students' writing for optimum improvement.	4.11	0.77
5	Adaptability to Technology	Encouraging students to use technology-based writing tools (e.g., Grammarly, Google Docs, Turnitin) to enhance their writing process.	4.08	0.83

5. Discussion

This part presents a comprehensive discussion on two principal findings in this study: (1) Students' perceptions regarding effective writing instructors in the digital age, and (2) qualities that the students perceive as the most impactful for their writing learning experience.

5.1. Students' Perceptions Regarding an Effective Writing Instructor in the Digital Age

The findings indicate that students perceive effective EFL writing instructors in the digital age as those who demonstrate a combination of pedagogical competence, linguistic competence, interpersonal skills, motivational strategies, and adaptability to technology. Pedagogical competence is highly rated, especially the ability to provide clear and constructive feedback, integrate real-world examples, and guide students in organizing their writing effectively. These results are in line with previous research, Sun & Qi and Zhang & Hyland [18, 27], which emphasizes that structured feedback and genre-based instruction significantly enhance writing profi-

ciency. It means that the students are aware that effective feedback could enhance writing proficiency by clarifying expectations, guiding revision, fostering self-regulation, and helping students internalize academic writing conventions and rhetorical strategies. Moreover, linguistic competence is crucial, with students prioritizing instructors who can clearly explain grammar, cohesion, and rhetorical structures. This supports Al-Seghayer's and Cheng & Zhang's argument that strong linguistic knowledge directly influences the effectiveness of instruction [17, 35]. With linguistic competence, the teachers can elucidate complex linguistic elements, properly identify student errors, and exemplify proficient writing. It also facilitates the enhancement of students' syntactic diversity, cohesiveness, and clarity, promoting more nuanced expression and academic precision essential for advanced tasks in writing across disciplines. In addition, although technology is significant, students emphasize the importance of instructional clarity. This suggests that teacher preparation should prioritize feedback competencies and significant technological integration to enhance writing competency.

Furthermore, interpersonal skills, such as providing individualized support and fostering a positive learning envi-

ronment, are essential, reinforcing the findings of Hajizadeh and Salahshour who highlight the role of teacher-student relations in writing development[33]. Motivational strategies, particularly recognizing student progress, are also critical, aligning with Li's assertion that encouragement enhances writing motivation[4]. Lastly, adaptability to technology is increasingly important, with students rating instructors who integrate digital tools like Grammarly and Google Docs[31, 49]. This reflects the growing emphasis on digital literacy in EFL writing instruction.

5.2. Qualities That Students Perceive as the Most Impactful for Their Writing Learning Experience

Of the five essential qualities examined, linguistic competence is the most impactful, closely followed by interpersonal skills and motivational strategies. The high rating for linguistic competence underscores the need for instructors to possess strong language proficiency and the ability to clarify complex writing concepts. This aligns with Deng et al.'s findings that students prioritize instructors who can model effective writing techniques[53]. The teachers are expected to be able to deliver clear explanations of grammar, cohesion, coherence, and rhetorical structures. Interpersonal skills, particularly individualized support, are equally crucial, as they help mitigate writing anxiety and foster confidence[20, 22]. Interpersonal support enhances resilience, diminishes frustration, fosters persistence, and aids students in managing stress while confidently navigating sophisticated writing difficulties. Motivational strategies, including recognizing students' progress, play a significant role in sustaining engagement, supporting Bashiri & Shahrokhi's argument that positive reinforcement enhances writing persistence[3]. Furthermore, acknowledging learners' progress enhances self-confidence, promotes diligence, reduces anxiety, cultivates trust, strengthens connections, and establishes a nurturing, inspiring educational atmosphere. Pedagogical competence remains vital, particularly in feedback provision, which corroborates Lee's research on the effectiveness of teacher feedback in L2 writing[32]. It means teachers need strong teaching skills to give helpful, clear responses that improve students' language abilities, boost their confidence, and develop better writing. Finally, adaptability to technology is increasingly recognized as essential, with students

appreciating instructors who leverage digital tools to facilitate writing improvement[30, 47]. Therefore, teachers must be flexible in using new technologies because students value when digital tools help them write better and learn more effectively. These findings collectively suggest that while linguistic and pedagogical expertise form the foundation of effective writing instruction, interpersonal rapport, motivational support, and technological integration are equally indispensable in the digital age. It is suggested that a more integrated approach is needed, where linguistic skill, digital fluency, and emotional intelligence converge. Future pedagogical models should prioritize dynamic, student-centered frameworks responsive to evolving digital writing contexts.

6. Conclusions

This study explores University students' perceptions of effective EFL writing instructors in the digital age, highlighting five key qualities: pedagogical competence, linguistic competence, interpersonal skills, motivational strategies, and adaptability to technology. The result found that the students appreciate explicit feedback, diverse instructional strategies, and the integration of digital resources. They also claim that strong linguistic proficiency, clear grammatical instruction, and effective writing modeling are also crucial. While interpersonal skills foster a supportive learning environment, motivational strategies, including recognition and meaningful assignments, maintain engagement. Lastly, adaptability to technology is essential, as students appreciate instructors who integrate digital tools and enhance technology-based feedback.

Among those, linguistic competence emerges as the most valued quality, with students emphasizing clear explanations of grammar, cohesion, and rhetorical structures. Interpersonal skills are also crucial, as individualized support fosters confidence and engagement. Motivational strategies, particularly recognition of progress, sustain commitment and self-efficacy. Pedagogical competence remains key, with students valuing clear, constructive feedback. Lastly, adaptability to technology is essential, as students appreciate the integration of digital tools to enhance learning and accessibility. The findings emphasize the need for teacher training programs to integrate diverse competencies, equipping instructors to effectively use digital tools while maintaining

strong interpersonal connections and fostering motivation in writing instruction. In addition, the present study offers insight into student perceptions, it does not examine the actual impact of these qualities on writing outcomes. Future research should explore the causal relationships between these instructional competencies and student performance through experimental or longitudinal designs.

Author Contributions

Conceptualization, R.; methodology, R.; software, S.A.; validation, R. and S.A.; formal analysis, S.A.; investigation, S.A.; resources, R.; data curation, S.A.; writing—original draft preparation, R. and S.A.; writing—review and editing, S.A.; visualization, S.A.; supervision, R.; project administration, All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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Data Availability Statement

The data can be accessed by contacting the first author at ribahan@uinmataram.ac.id.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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