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The Promotion of Critical Thinking in Writing Classes: University Students' Perceptions and Critical Thinking Performance in Writing

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Abstract

Promoting students' critical thinking (CT) in writing classes gained attention in the education system following the requirement of students' CT ability in academic writing, particularly in higher education. The study sought to uncover how instructors promote students' CT in writing classes as perceived by university students and students' CT performance in writing. The participants were 330 first-year university students selected from Wolkite University using a stratified sampling technique. A questionnaire of Students' Perceptions of the Promotion of CT in Writing (SPPCTW) and essay writing were used to generate data. The data analysis included descriptive statistics, spearman rho correlation, and multiple regression. The findings revealed that instructors utilized some particular CT stimulating strategies. These included allowing students to work collaboratively, make arguments, and examine the role of different expressions, words, and ideas before writing. They allowed students to perform argumentative and expository writing activities through the process approach. Contrarily, the students reported limited chances to challenge instructors' perspectives, generate ideas from different sources, and do self-reflection. The result further indicated a positive and statistically significant relationship between the students' perceptions of instructors' promotion of CT in writing classes and students' CT performance in writing. Besides, the three factors (CI, IM, and NWA) had a statistically significant and positive impact on students' CT performance in writing. Yet, the impact of SFP was negative and not statistically significant. These findings could provide insights to different concerned bodies in the English language teaching field.

INTRODUCTION

Critical thinking dominated the education system following the increasing demand for learners equipped with CT ability in different sectors. Çavdar and Doe

(2012) argued that learners equipped with CT make logical decisions by examining information from several perspectives. They synthesize ideas and systematically manipulate information proliferations. Corroborating this view, Azwati et al. (2022) asserted that CT surpasses providing quick and accurate responses to questions. It empowers the ability to process information reasonably, solve problems logically and scrutinize information credibility. Sari et al. (2018) added that CT supports learners to "evaluate evidence, assumptions, underlying logic, and language of other person's statement" (p. 547). CT is, therefore, pivotal to learners to efficiently undertake responsibilities in various areas by making analytical, evaluative, and logical decisions.

CT evolves into an inevitable ability in students' academic writing in higher education. Effective communication of meaning in writing cannot be attained through merely repeating language. It instead demands writers' CT ability to compose texts retaining the purpose through plausible reasoning, evidence, and conclusion (Nejmaoui, 2019). Matthews and Lally (2010) argued that "writing, thinking, and reasoning are inseparable. If students reach university, they will be expected to demonstrate critical thinking whenever they write academic essays or reports within their chosen discipline" (p. 137). Students, at the tertiary level, are supposed to produce high-quality writing products that involve logical and convincing views comprehensibly (Sari et al., 2018).

In the Ethiopian context, the English language has an indispensable role in the education sector, particularly at the tertiary level. It serves as the medium of instruction to deliver varied undergraduate and postgraduate courses (Bachore, 2015). Besides, it has become compulsory for first-year university students to attend two consecutive English language courses. Following this prominence of the language, students' endeavor to possess adequate writing ability becomes a requisite to their ongoing learning in universities. Academic learning in university requires students to spend most of their time composing complex written assignments (Crème & Lea, 2003). They accomplish different writing tasks such as essays, reports, term papers, reviews, and senior student projects (Tewodros, 2016). University instructors, however, complain about students' insufficient CT in their written papers. They mention the students' failure to logically relate ideas and provide justification with sufficient clarity, complexity, and precision. Students' grammatical and mechanics problems became serious concerns (Ebabu, 2013; Tewodros, 2016).

Because of the decisive role of CT in students' academic learning, the initiative to promote students' CT earned emphasis in the Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) 2010/15 in Ethiopia (Ministry of Education (MoE), 2011). This resulted in 'CT and logic' being designated as a compulsory course offered to first-year university students. Besides, the educational curriculums for universities advocate promoting students' CT using a learner-centered approach (MoE, 2018). Accordingly, university instructors attend in-service training focusing on reinforcing students' CT ability using a learner-centered approach (MoE, 2011). The instructors' classroom practices are, therefore, expected to adhere to the principles of the university curriculums.

Despite the curriculum principles, instructors' classroom decisions in using varied instructional strategies and activities impact students' CT in writing classes (Rodzalan & Saat, 2015). The effectiveness of instructors' decisions to promote students' CT is, however, determined by the students' perceptions of the instructors' practices (Ferreira & Santoso, 2008). Ferreira and Santoso (2008) argued that students employ a particular learning approach based on their perceptions of instructors' practices so that their performance gets impacted.

In this respect, An (2020) investigated East Asian students' perceptions of CT. The study revealed that students perceived their teachers implemented an indirect approach to stimulate students' CT. The strategies included offering feedback on written assignments, posing critical questions, and encouraging class discussions. Similarly, Setyorini (2018) explored students' perceptions and learning experiences of CT in writing class. The result indicated that writing lecturers trigger students' CT ability by explaining the material, giving writing assignments, and allowing students to analyze texts and do class discussions. In a different way, Du and Zhang (2022) associated students' performance and perceptions in a study about EFL learners' perceptions of CT learning affordances. The finding disclosed that the high achievers had better perceptions of the CT learning environment. These students benefited from the learning environments because of their better motivation, learner autonomy, and positive perceptions.

The aforementioned studies exclusively emphasized the students' perceptions of instructors' practices. Despite the inclusion of students' performance in Du and Zhang's study, the focus was on the impact of students' performance on their perceptions. Consequently, this investigation on instructors' practices of promoting students' CT in writing classes as perceived by university students and students' CT

performance in writing provides a noteworthy contribution. The study, therefore, responded to the following research questions:

1. How do university students perceive instructors' practices in promoting CT in writing classes?
2. What is the relationship between university students' perceptions of instructors' practices of promoting CT in writing classes and students' CT performance in writing?
3. Do instructors' practices of promoting students' CT in writing classes, as perceived by university students, predict students' CT performance in writing?

Practices of Promoting CT in Writing Classes

Instructors promote students' CT in writing classes using several mechanisms. Wilson (2019) argued that promoting CT is possible in a language class, which is "interactive, vibrant, authentic, explicit and scaffolded" (p. 14). Collaborative learning that embraces group discussion, peer feedback, and group work found an optimal strategy to reinforce CT in writing classes (Buranapatana, 2006; Dwee et al., 2016). Students practice CT by sharing ideas, comparing and contrasting perspectives, and generating and evaluating information in collaboration (Osborne et al., 2009). According to Buranapatana (2006), students acclimatize to mental strategies when their peers implement CT skills. They logically handle activities that require higher cognitive and reasoning skills when performing collaboratively (Daud, 2012).

Along with collaboration, questioning supports to promote students' CT. Fahim and Khatib (2013) asserted that "it is the duty of the teacher to implicitly ask students to attend to strategies of critical thinking and to evaluate each reasoning and argument on a multi-dimensional level before accepting it as correct" (p.82). A lecture that embraces questions stimulates students' ability to analyze, synthesize and evaluate information (Schafersman, 1991). Beyer (2001a, cited in Buranapatana, 2006) indicated the importance of questions that "call for sustained efforts to reason and to evaluate reasoning" (p.89). These questions, according to Beyer, require respondents to "clarify statements, define terms, and judge the relevance, accuracy, and nature of statements" (p.89).

Moreover, researchers (e.g., Dong, 2015; Mehta & Al-Mahrouqi, 2015) signified the importance of aligning reading with writing to promote students' CT. Mehta and Al-Mahrouqi argued that writing fails to retain its purpose and credibility unless

supported with a thorough reading. Such writings become subjugated by simple opinions, biases, prejudices, and myths. Thus, activities that include interpreting, analyzing, and evaluating reasoning, explaining the implied meaning in a text, and making inferences reinforce CT in writing classes (Case, 2004; Fahim & Eslamdoost, 2014). Intellectuals (e.g., Case, 2004; Çavdar & Doe, 2012) indicated several CT-stimulating writing tasks. These are summary writing, note-taking, and reflective writing; narrative, argumentative, persuasive, and opinion writing; and writing seminar papers.

Students' Perceptions of Instructors' Practices and Students' CT Performance

Students' psychological response to the instructors' practices ascertains the efficiency of instructors' practices in promoting students' CT. Perception is a cognitive process that facilitates the recognition and meaningful interpretation of sensory information concerning events in the physical environment (Jusnaeni, 2020; Putri, 2021). Scholars (Brok, 2001; Carter, 2021) explained that students possess perceptions of what they experience in the instructional situation. They examine and interpret the interactions with peers and teachers, the teaching practices, and the general classroom environment. This internal process of the surrounding events inversely impacts their manner (Kurniawan, 2015). Students' perceptions of the teaching practices influence their cognitive processing, motivation, or willingness to actively engage in the learning process, which ultimately impacts their performance (Carter, 2021; Kurniawan, 2015). Carter (2021), therefore, underscored instructors' responsibility to select helpful materials cautiously, employ various teaching methods, and create engaging environments.

METHOD

Research Design

A descriptive research design was employed. This design permits for describing students' perceptions of instructors' practices, determining the relationship between students' perceptions and their CT performance, and assessing the impact of students' perceptions on their CT performance (Marczyk et al., 2005).

Participants

The study was carried out at Wolkite University in Ethiopia. The university offers the Communicative English Language Skills II course to all first-year students. The

course incorporated writing lessons. The data was, therefore, collected from first-year students who took the course.

Table 1. Participants' Demographic Information

Streams	Gender		
	Male	**Female**	**Total**
Natural Science	95	42	137
Social Science	66	33	99
Pre Engineering	40	14	54
Pharmacy	24	16	40
Total	**225**	**105**	**330**

There were 2316 first-year students in the university in the 2021/22 academic year. For this study, 330 first-year students were selected using a 95% confidence level sampling strategy (Cohen et al., 2007). A stratified sampling technique accompanied by simple random sampling was employed to select the samples from four streams (see Table 1).

Instruments

Questionnaire

A questionnaire of Students' Perceptions of the Promotion of CT in Writing (SPPCTW) was employed to generate data. The tool incorporated 38 closed-ended items presented in four themes: classroom interaction, instructional mechanism, nature of writing activities, and system of feedback provision. The items were constructed with a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 'never' to 'always'. The questionnaire was designed based on scholarly works (Al-Kindi & AL-Mekhlafi, 2017; Chen, 2017; Kusaeri & Aditomo, 2019; Paul & Elder, 2002). It was pilot-tested, and Cronbach's alpha result (0.80) indicates high reliability (Cohen et al., 2007).

Measurement of Students' CT Performance in Writing

The students' CT performance in writing was assessed based on an essay they wrote on the topic '*Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Grades (marks) encourage students to learn. Use specific reasons and examples to support your opinion'*. The topic was selected from IELTS (n.d.). The students' CT performance was evaluated using an 'Evaluation criteria for CT in writing' adapted from Dong (2015). The reliability of the tool by Dong (2015) produced high reliability (r=0.88). The rubric was further pilot-tested, and the result showed excellent reliability- 0.90 (Koo & Li, 2016).

Data Collection Procedure and Analysis

The authors obtained the students' consent to participate before the data collection began. The data collection followed the students' completion of studying the Communicative English Language Skills II course. This enabled them to describe instructors' practices throughout the writing sessions. The questionnaire was distributed to the students after they submitted the essay papers.

The data concerning the students' perceptions of the instructors' practices of promoting CT was examined using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation). The mean value was interpreted using Oxford's (1990) explanation of averages: high frequency (3.5-5.0), medium frequency (2.5-3.4), and low frequency (1.0-2.4). Spearman's rho was computed to investigate the relationship between students' perceptions and CT performance. Furthermore, multiple regression was employed to assess how the students' perceptions predict students' CT performance. The impact of the sub-scales of instructors' CT promotion- Classroom Interaction, Instructional Mechanism, Nature of Writing Activities, and System of Feedback Provision- on students' CT performance was investigated. The statistical test was processed using SPSS version 25.

RESULT

How do university students perceive instructors' practices in promoting CT in writing classes?

The descriptive analysis shows the mean and standard deviation of items that portray the frequency of classroom interaction, instructional mechanisms, writing activities, and feedback provision.

Classroom Interaction (CI)

The students perceived that the instructors entertained CT-stimulating classroom interaction at a medium frequency (M=2.61, SD=.51) during writing lessons (see Table 2).

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics-CI

No.	Item	*M*	*SD*
1	The instructor gives me a chance to share my opinion.	2.65	.77
2	The instructor encourages me to pose questions.	2.51	.91
3	He/she initiates me to make arguments related to a topic for writing	2.88	.77
4	He/she allows me to challenge his/her perspective about an issue.	2.29	.80
5	He/she focuses on asking questions than giving information.	2.67	.96
6	He/she encourages me to challenge other students' points of view.	2.79	.72
7	He/she gives me a chance to perform writing tasks collaboratively.	2.83	.72
8	The instructor initiates class discussions on topics for writing.	2.76	.98

9	He/she initiates me to be curious to validate my statements.	2.38	.89
10	He/she encourages me to handle opposing ideas on a particular topic.	2.34	.78
11	The instructor appreciates my responses (opinions, thoughts, etc).	2.62	.80
Classroom Interaction		**2.61**	**.51**

The implementations of some practices were at a medium frequency (items 1,2, 3,5,6,7,8,11), while the others were at a lower level (items 4,9,10). The result indicated that the practices in item 3 (M=2.88, SD=.77) and item 7 (M=2.83, SD= .72) were at an average frequency, yet better than the other practices. In contrast, the students perceived the instructors' practice in item 4 at a lower frequency than the others (M=2.29, SD=.80).

Instructional Mechanism (IM)

As depicted in Table 3, the participants perceived that the instructors employed CT-oriented instructional mechanisms at a medium frequency (M=2.93, SD=1.00). The instructors implemented all the specific practices under this theme at an average level.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics-IM

No.	Item	*M*	*SD*
12	The instructor gives me time to generate ideas, write the first draft, revise, and write the final text.	3.15	1.28
13	The instructor presents sample text to let me analyze and evaluate ideas.	2.70	1.02
14	He/she encourages me **NOT** to worry about mechanics, vocabulary, and grammar until I have made my points.	2.62	.98
15	He/she helps me to be aware of the purpose of my writing when developing texts.	2.78	.96
16	He/she encourages me to examine the role of different expressions, words, and ideas when preparing to write.	3.22	1.30
17	He/she helps me to identify ideas in support of or against a particular point of view.	3.13	1.26
18	He/she encourages me to evaluate the relevance and credibility of information.	3.05	1.31
19	He/she encourages me to consider multiple perspectives/explanations related to a topic in my writing.	3.08	1.25
20	He/she suggests I include justified evidence and examples in my writing.	3.07	1.30
21	He/she helps me to include relevant and sufficient details in my writing.	3.11	1.30
22	He/she supports me to clarify ideas in my writing.	2.77	1.01
23	He/she allows me to generate information from various sources on a topic before starting to write.	2.65	.98
24	He/she gives me examples of how to develop ideas logically in writing.	2.73	.95
Instructional Mechanism		**2.93**	**1.00**

Among the others, the participants perceived the issue in item 16 (M=3.22, SD=1.30) to have a better frequency, though it is still at a medium range. However, the instructors' practice in item 14 (M=2.62, SD=.98) was relatively low.

Nature of Writing Activities (NWA)

The participants perceived that the instructors assigned CT-stimulating writing activities in writing classes at an average frequency (M=2.88, SD=1.07). As presented in Table 4, the writing activity in item 28(M=3.10, SD=1.25) had a better occurrence in writing classes followed by item 27 (M=3.08, SD=1.28).

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics-NWA

No.	Item	*M*	*SD*
25	The instructor suggests that I practice note-taking and summary writing.	2.52	1.05
26	The instructor allows me to do reflective writing activities.	3.02	1.27
27	He/she instructs me to do activities that demand comparing and contrasting issues.	3.08	1.28
28	He/she gives me activities that require me to identify ideas that support or contest a particular point of view.	3.10	1.25
29	He/she gives me writing activities that require including multiple points of view.	2.71	1.10
30	He/she assigns writing activities that demand me to include examples and evidence.	3.05	1.27
31	The instructor gives writing activities that require me to identify the cause and solution.	3.04	1.26
32	He/she asks me to do writing activities on the logical arrangement of ideas.	2.53	1.11
Nature of Writing Activities		**2.88**	**1.07**

Although they were still at the average level, the activities in item 25 (M=2.52, SD=1.05) and item 32 (M=2.53, SD=1.11) were relatively less frequent.

System of Feedback Provision (SFP)

The students perceived that the overall feedback provision system falls in a medium range (M=2.68, SD=.80), as implied in Table 5. The instructor feedback (item 33, M=3.05, SD=1.07) appeared more frequently than peer feedback (item 37, M=2.95, SD=1.13). Self-feedback/reflection was reported to occur less frequently (item 35, M=2.38, SD=.84).

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics-SFP

No.	Item	*M*	*SD*
33	The instructor gives me comments throughout the process of writing.	3.05	1.07
34	He/she provides feedback on the presentation of my idea (e.g., clarity, relevance, logicalness, accuracy, depth, precision, breadth, and fairness).	2.97	1.13
35	He/she provides me the opportunity to reflect on my writing.	2.38	.84
36	He/she assists me to self-reflect on my writing concerning the clarity, relevance, logicalness, accuracy, depth, precision, breadth, and fairness of ideas.	2.34	.76
37	He/she encourages me to comment on others' written texts.	2.95	1.13
38	He/she encourages me to comment on others' written texts concerning the clarity, relevance, logicalness, accuracy, depth, precision, breadth, and fairness of ideas.	2.41	.98
System of Feedback Provision		**2.68**	**.80**

Furthermore, the result indicated the instructors' focus on some relevant aspects of students' writing while providing feedback (item 34, M=2.97, SD=1.13). Contrarily, the students reported the instructors' low encouragement of students in providing peer feedback on some important issues (item 38, M=2.41, SD=.98).

What is the relationship between university students' perceptions of instructors' practices of promoting CT in writing classes and students' CT performance in writing?

The correlation was computed using Spearman's rho. Table 6 displayed the correlation between the general students' perception of instructors' CT promotion and its subscales with the students' CT performance.

Table 6. The Correlation Result

SPPCTW Scale	Students' CT Performance
Classroom Interaction (CI)	0.89**
Instructional Mechanism (IM)	0.67**
Nature of Writing Activities (NWA)	0.90**
System of Feedback Provision (SFP)	0.87**
General CT Promotion (GCTP)	0.93**

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

As shown in Table 6, there was a positive relationship between the variables. This indicates that the increment in instructors' promotion of students' CT as perceived by students aligns with the increase in students' CT performance. The correlation coefficient of 0.67 indicates a strong correlation according to Muijs' (2004) description of effect size that considers a strong correlation for results ranging between +/-5 up to +/- 0.8. The other correlation results showed a very strong relationship since all are >0.8. Besides, the correlations were statistically significant ($p< 0.01$). This indicated that the instructors' promotion of students' CT as perceived by their students was related to students' CT performance in writing.

Do instructors' practices of promoting students' CT in writing classes, as perceived by university students, predict students' CT performance in writing?

The study specifically investigated the predictive power of students' perceptions of instructors' CT promotion scales (CI, IM, NWA, and SFP) in students' CT performance. The independent variables (CI, IM, NWA, and SFP) were hypothesized to predict the dependent variable (students' CT performance).

Table 7: The Multiple Regression Results

Hypotheses	B	Beta (β)	T	p-value	Results
H1 [CI→SCTP]	9.104	.337	7.371	.000*	Supported
H2 [IM→SCTP]	4.027	.291	7.905	.000*	Supported
H3 [NWA→SCTP]	5.822	.453	7.832	.000*	Supported
H4 [SFP→SCTP]	-1.103	-.064	-1.009	.314	Not supported
R^2	.833				
F(4,325)	403.890				

**p<0.05. SCTP: Students' Critical Thinking Performance*

As shown in Table 7, the independent variables significantly predicted students' CT performance, F(4,325) = 403.890, p<000, which indicated that the three factors (CI, IM, NWA) significantly impacted students' CT performance. Moreover, the R^2 = .833 depicted that the model explains 83.3% of the variance in students' CT performance. This illustrates a strong size effect of the model in creating a variation in the students' CT performance (Muijs, 2004).

The study examined the impact of each predictor on the students' CT performance. The results revealed statistically significant and positive impacts of the three factors on students' CT performance with CI (t=7.371,p<.000, β=.337), IM (t= 7.905, p<.000, β=.291) and NWA (t= 7.832, p<.000, β=.453). In contrast, the impact of SFP was negative and not statistically significant (t=-1.009, p=.314, β=-.064). Additionally, the positive slope for CI (B=9.104) indicated that there was about a 9.104 increase in students' CT performance for each 1-point increase in CI. One point increase in each IM and NWA resulted in an increment of students' CT performance of about 4.027 and 5.822, respectively. Contrarily, the negative slope for SFP (B=-1.103) indicated that students' CT performance goes down by1.10 as SFP rises by one.

DISCUSSION

The finding revealed that instructors employed some CT-promoting strategies at a relatively better frequency based on students' perceptions. For instance, giving chances to students to make arguments, do writing activities in collaboration, and examine the role of different expressions, words, and ideas before writing. The instructors encouraged them to perform activities related to argumentation and expository through a process approach to writing. Despite a better implementation of instructor feedback, the result indicated that the utilization of peer feedback was not entirely ignored.

The finding implies that students had the opportunity to exercise CT in writing classes to some extent. Different scholars (e.g., Buranapatana, 2006; Dwee et al., 2016; Wilson, 2019) asserted that working in collaboration benefits students to generate and examine various information and learn to demonstrate CT components while negotiating and reasoning out ideas together. Researchers (Dwee et al., 2016; Zhao et al., 2016), however, emphasized that the effectiveness of

students' collaboration is maintained by the instructor's follow-up and students' enthusiastic involvement. Besides, students might recognize alternative assumptions when making arguments on a topic for writing. The result corroborates the findings of some studies (e.g., An, 2020; Jusnaeni, 2020; Sadeghi et al., 2020) that revealed students' perceptions of having chances to work in groups and share their perspectives with peers.

Additionally, instructors' encouragement of students to do argumentative and expository writing activities following the process approach to writing exposes students to exercise CT. Intellectuals (Dwee et al., 2016; Rashtchi & Khoshnevisan, 2020) argued that students think critically by examining information and selecting the right idea when they are encouraged to outline, draft, and revise. Similarly, writing activities that require students to compare and contrast and argue on a particular perspective stimulate students' CT (Fahim et al., 2014; Schafersman, 1991). Additionally, researchers (Daud, 2012; Walker & Diaz, 2003) underlined the relevance of instructor feedback and peer feedback to promoting students' CT. Students interpret, analyze, evaluate, and recognize alternative ideas while performing peer feedback.

Contrarily, the finding indicated the prevalence of particular CT-promoting practices that the instructors utilized at a lower level. Students perceived that they were rarely permitted to challenge instructors' perspectives. Their response further showed a relatively lower frequency level regarding instructors' encouragement to **NOT** worry about mechanics, vocabulary, and grammar until they put the main points. In other words, students were highly expected to think about the basics of the language before constructing their main points in writing. Students reported receiving an inadequate chance to generate information from various sources before writing. In relatively less frequency, the instructors assigned students writing activities such as note-taking, summary writing, and logical arrangement of ideas. Moreover, the result indicated a low implementation of self-feedback/reflection.

Scholars (Rashtchi & Khoshnevisan, 2020; Wilson, 2019) explained the role of encouraging students to question ideas and to read different sources. They stated that students' exposure to scrutinizing instructors' perspectives stimulates students' ability to analyze, synthesize and evaluate assumptions instead of simply accepting them. Likewise, reading different sources before writing broadens students' understanding of the issue. Moreover, self-reflection and writing activities such as

summary writing, note-taking, and logical arrangement of ideas enable students to think about their thinking and apply CT components (Case, 2004; Daud, 2012; Fahim et al., 2014).

The result further indicated a positive and significant relationship between students' perceptions of instructors' promotion of students' CT in writing class and students' CT performance in writing. This implies that the students' CT performance in writing improves as their perception of the instructors' practices of CT promotion increases and vice versa. Besides, the finding revealed statistically significant and positive impacts of the three factors (CI, IM, and NWA) on students' CT performance. In contrast, the impact of SFP on students' CT performance was negative and not statistically significant.

Findings about the relationship between student's perceptions of the teaching process and academic performance are inconclusive. Scholars (e.g., Atkins, 2018; Dart et al., 1999; McRobbie & Fraser, 1993) explained the relationship between student's perceptions of the learning environment and their academic achievement. They stated that students' perceptions of the teaching and learning process influence their motivation, engagement, and learning approach which inversely impacts their academic performance. Entwistle et al. (2002 cited in Ferreira & Santoso, 2008) asserted that students' learning outcome is more impacted by their perceptions of teaching than the teaching method used in the classroom. Contrary to the findings of this study, Carter's (2021) study revealed no relationship between the student's perceptions of the teaching process and their academic achievement. On the reverse, Du and Zhang's (2022) study showed a significant impact of students' academic performance on their perceptions of the CT learning environment. In other words, students' language proficiency determines their perceptions of a CT-nurturing learning environment.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to investigate how instructors promote students' CT in writing classes as perceived by students and students' CT performance in writing. The results indicated that instructors promote students' CT at an average level as perceived by students. This implies the students' exposure to thinking critically in writing classes, though it was inadequate due to the prevalence of some instructors' practices at a lower frequency level. For instance, the students' minimum

opportunities to question the instructor's perspective and to generate information from various sources indicate students' tendency to accept ideas for granted instead of searching for alternatives. In addition, the study revealed a relatively lower implementation of activities such as note-taking, summary writing, and logical arrangement of ideas. This denotes the absence of employing varieties of CT-stimulating writing activities. The low execution of self-reflection compared to instructor feedback shows instructors' dominance with little trust in students' ability to reflect on their work. The negative impact of students' perception of SFP on their CT performance can further imply the need to provide better reinforcement to students' self-reflection and peer feedback. Receiving a lot of instructor feedback might cause anxiety that reversely affects students' performance.

The findings of this study provide insights to different stakeholders in the domain of English language teaching. Instructors should examine their classroom decisions and thereby employ different teaching approaches and activities that create broader opportunities for students to exercise CT in writing classes. In doing so, instructors should be cognizant of the perceptions of their students about the overall events in the classroom. Such practices may contribute to the improvement of the teaching and learning process in general and students' CT abilities in particular. Similarly, teacher educators obtain an overview of instructors' practices in promoting students' CT. Hence, they consider some strategies while training prospective instructors. The findings, furthermore, inform material designers to include diverse CT-stimulating writing activities that extend students' opportunity to exercise CT in writing classes. Further studies can investigate the underlying factors that mediate the relationship between students' perceptions and performance, particularly concerning the promotion of CT in writing classes.

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