THE CORRELATION BETWEEN MOTIVATION AND WRITING SKILL OF THE SEVENTH-GRADE STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Writing is a vital learning tool that helps students better grasp language elements in authentic settings, which is why it is so important in language instruction. This implies that in order for students to write well, they must use their minds. Motivation is therefore essential in writing since it is an internal force that motivates and enables students to act. The researcher is therefore interested in determining whether motivation and writing ability are significantly correlated. The primary objective of this research is to ascertain whether there is a noteworthy correlation between the writing proficiency and motivation of seventh-grade students at SMP Negeri 14 Denpasar during the 2024–2025 academic year. Using an ex-post facto design and a correlation technique, the study included 122 students from three classes who were chosen using cluster sampling. A writing exam and a questionnaire were the research instruments used to gather data. The research process revealed a high correlation between writing skills and motivation. The findings demonstrated a considerable correlation (a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.727) between students' writing abilities and motivation. In summary, writing proficiency and motivation are significantly correlated among seventh-grade students at SMP Negeri 14 Denpasar in the 2024–2025 school year.

Keywords: correlation, motivation, writing skill

INTRODUCTION

Writing is regarded as a productive skill in language learning and is a key component of language instruction since it is a necessary learning tool that helps students better understand language elements in authentic contexts. However, students need to have a clear idea of what they want to say and not just put words together without thinking (Oshima & Hogue, 2007).

Since writing in English is a difficult task that requires a variety of skills, including grammar and theoretical knowledge, to produce a well-crafted result, students must have a clear idea of what they wish to write and how to develop their writing effectively. This means that students must use their minds to produce high-quality written work. Studies found that this difficulty make the students low in writing (Moybeka dkk., 2023; Pramerta & Malayfana, 2024)

Writing in both native and other languages is regarded as one of the hardest abilities to learn (Zemach & Islam, 2005). This is due to the fact that writing is a productive talent, and students learning to write must learn to recognize ideas and successfully convey them in writing. Writing may be defined as the ability to express ideas through written symbols by structuring concepts in accordance with the norms of the linguistic system. This enables readers to comprehend the writer's message. Format, punctuation, mechanics, substance, organization, grammar, and sentence

structure are all important components of a well-written paragraph.

To write an essay that is clear and cohesive, students need to focus on these elements. Writing a paragraph presents challenges for many students (Amalia, Abdullah, & Fatimah, 2021). They are required to express their ideas, opinions, and thoughts in writing on a variety of papers. Students will find it difficult to produce written material if they lack of motivation.

An internal force known as motivation propels and fortifies a person's behavior. According to Brophy (2004), the theoretical concept of motivation aids in the explanation of the onset, course, intensity, and persistence of conduct, especially behavior intended to accomplish particular objectives. Since motivated students participate more actively, learning becomes more pleasurable and they grasp the material more rapidly, motivation is essential to the learning process. As a result, the learning process is crucial to deciding success in writing assignments, and writing motivation is an internal drive.

Dörnyei & Ushioda (2011) stated that motivation is what makes students decide to take action. It is the element that affects how strongly someone wants to participate in an activity. Even whether they struggle with spelling, grammar, vocabulary, or punctuation, motivated students will be more willing to participate in writing assignments. Students who are motivated are excited to write more. Students that are motivated are more inclined to be interested in learning how to write. Students that are highly motivated are better able to get past obstacles when writing. Motivation encourages students to work harder and be more persistent during the teaching and learning process, especially when it comes to writing.

Unfortunately, students had trouble writing well-structured paragraphs, especially when it came to coming up with and organizing ideas for descriptive paragraphs. It was noted that when students started writing a paragraph, they frequently got stuck after just two or three sentences because they were having trouble connecting their ideas, which made them lose motivation to finish. Brophy (2004) suggests that motivation is key to enabling students to write better.

While low-motivated students frequently believe their writing is insufficient, highly motivated students usually have superior writing abilities (Wang & Troia, 2023). This emphasizes how crucial it is to comprehend how students' motivation and writing abilities are related. In light of this, the researcher wants to find out if writing and motivation are significantly correlated, especially when it comes to creating descriptive paragraphs. By

investigating whether there is a meaningful relationship between motivation and writing abilities at SMP Negeri 14 Denpasar, the researcher hopes to validate the aforementioned beliefs.

RESEARCH METHODS

Research is a technique used to validate scientific theories, obtain new information, or answer questions. A conceptual framework known as study design describes how a researcher would gather, quantify, and examine data. Its goal is to guarantee that pertinent evidence is obtained effectively while requiring the least amount of time, effort, and energy (Kothari, 2004). For this study, the researcher applied an ex post facto research design. As explained by Cohen et al. (2007), the phrase ex post facto refers to "from what it is done afterward." It refers to the examination of current circumstances or events in order to determine possible cause-and-effect linkages by examining past plausible causative causes in the field of social and educational research.

The researcher concentrated on two variables in this study: writing ability as the dependent variable (Y) and motivation as the independent variable (X). Positive task orientation, ego-involvement, achievement demands, high ambitions, goal orientation, and perseverance are some of the important components of motivation, which

encompasses elements that impact students. The ability of students to write descriptive paragraphs was the primary focus of the study on writing skills. The researcher's goal was to evaluate the format, syntax, sentence structure, content, organization, punctuation, and mechanics of producing descriptive paragraphs. The purpose of this study was to ascertain whether the writing abilities and motivation of the seventh-grade students are significantly correlated.

In this research, the participants are a crucial component for carrying out the study. According to Singh (2007), the population consists of the seventh-grade students at SMP Negeri 14 Denpasar in the academic year 2024/2025; there are seven classes of seventh-grade students at SMP Negeri 14 Denpasar, and the researcher chose three of these classes to serve as the sample; each class has about 40 students, and there are approximately 280 seventh-grade students at the school; the three selected classes are VII A, VII B, and VII C, making a total of 122 samples. The term "population" refers to a group of students, things, or items from which samples are chosen for measurement. The researcher used cluster sampling in this study to choose the participants.

Designing a research instrument is a crucial aspect of any research design, as the instrument is used to gather data. In this study, the researcher utilized two instruments

to collect data on students' motivation and writing skills: a questionnaire and a written test. To assess the students' motivation, a printed motivation questionnaire was distributed to the participants. The questionnaire consists of 30 items. The scale used point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5. The students were asked to give a sign (√) of each the number which represents their response for evaluating their writing skills, the researcher administered a writing test where students were asked to write a descriptive paragraph about one of their family members.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the findings regarding the correlation between seventh-grade students' writing skills and motivation at SMP Negeri 14 Denpasar in the academic year 2024/2025.

280 students made up the population for this ex post facto study. The researcher chose 122 students as the sample because of the size of the population. The study examined the relationship between writing abilities and motivation in seventh-grade students at SMP Negeri 14 Denpasar for the 2024–2025 school year. Every seventh-grader had an equal chance of being selected for the research sample. The researcher chose classes VII A, VII B, and VII C using a cluster sampling technique to make sure of

this. These samples were expected to be representative of the broader population.

The researcher employed a questionnaire and a writing test as data collection tools. The students were given the questionnaire, which included 30 items in Bahasa Indonesia intended to gauge their motivation level, and then they were given the writing test, in which they were asked to select a family member as the subject. They were required to write a descriptive paragraph, structured into three parts: identification, description, and conclusion, containing between 6 to 12 sentences. The descriptive paragraph was then evaluated using a scoring rubric adapted from Oshima & Hogue (2007), which focused on aspects of written language such as grammar, vocabulary, organization, spelling, and punctuation.

The data were collected through the administration of a written test and a questionnaire. Students wrote their descriptive paragraphs based on the given topic and completed all the questionnaire items. They submitted their written paragraphs on answer sheets provided to them, while the questionnaire was completed via Google Forms. The researcher personally collected the required data. A total of 122 respondents participated, selected through cluster sampling from three of the seven seventh-grade classes at SMP Negeri 14

Denpasar. The total scores for motivation (X) were 12,188, and for writing skill (Y) were 9,624. The mean scores were 99.90 for motivation (X) and 78.89 for writing skill (Y), while the median scores were 99.00 for motivation (X) and 78.00 for writing skill (Y). Additionally, the standard deviation (SD) for motivation (X) was 11.97, and for writing skill (Y) it was 8.91.

The data were then thoroughly analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25. The necessary data for this ex-post facto research were carefully analyzed using statistical methods. The data analysis process involved a prerequisite analysis, which included two statistical tests: the normality test and the homogeneity test. Additionally, hypothesis testing was conducted, which involved two analyses: the Pearson product-moment correlation and the t-test.

Before the process could proceed to the next step, which is hypothesis testing, two prerequisite analyses had to be completed: the normality test and the homogeneity test, which required that the data be distributed to the sample in a normal and homogeneous manner. As a result, the results of these two tests were meticulously examined, and the explanation of their results follows.

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to determine whether the collected data were normally distributed, as it is usually applied for large samples of 50 or more participants. For smaller sample sizes (fewer than 50), the Shapiro-Wilk test is generally preferred. After performing the calculation using SPSS 25, the results showed that the significance level of the data analyzed using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was above 0.05 for both variables. This indicates that the motivation and writing skill data followed a normal distribution. According to the Kolmogorov-Smirnov table, the significance value for motivation was 0.200, which is greater than 0.05, confirming that the data is normally distributed.

The homogeneity test was conducted on the data collected from the research samples. The result of the homogeneity test indicated that the data were above the alpha level of 0.05. Specifically, the significance value for both motivation and writing skill showed that the Levene Statistic score was 1.375, with a significance value of 0.151, which is greater than 0.05. According to Gray and Kinnear (2012), if the result of the homogeneity test exceeds 0.05, it suggests that the variances can be assumed to be homogeneous. This means that the data were homogeneously distributed. Therefore, since the significance value was higher than 0.05, the data for motivation and writing skill were homogeneous. As a result, further testing could proceed, as the prerequisite analyses have met the necessary conditions.

Hypothesis testing involves the steps taken by the researcher to evaluate the assumptions of the study and determine whether those assumptions can be accepted. After classifying all the scores, the next step is to calculate the correlation coefficient. The researcher employed the Pearson Product Moment correlation to examine the relationship between motivation and writing skill, and a T-test was used to test the hypothesis.

If the correlation between the variables is near -1.00, the data is said to be negatively linked. On the other hand, the data can be classified as positively correlated if the correlation is near +1.00. The correlation will be near zero when the variables have a weak relationship. The Pearson correlation between writing ability and motivation was 1, showing a relationship between the two variables, according to the Pearson Product Moment analysis. The correlation coefficient for these variables was 0.727, which suggests a strong association between them, according to Sugiyono (2015), correlation index. Furthermore, the alternative hypothesis (Ha) is accepted because the sig (2-tailed) value was 0.000, which is below the significance level of 0.05, indicating a significantly positive correlation between writing skill and motivation of the seventh-grade students of SMP Negeri 14 Denpasar.

There are three types of T-tests: independent samples, paired samples, and one sample. In this study, the researcher used the paired samples T-test to analyze the data. The data are considered significantly correlated if the correlation coefficient is less than 0.05, in which case the hypothesis is accepted. Conversely, if the correlation coefficient is greater than 0.05, the data are not significantly correlated, and the hypothesis is rejected. It is evident from the findings that all of the data groups examined using the Paired Sample T-test had a significance level of 0.000, which is less than the 0.05 threshold. Thus, it can be said that there is a considerable correlation between writing ability and motivation. This indicates that among the seventh-grade students at SMP Negeri 14 Denpasar in the academic year 2024–2025, there was a substantial link between writing proficiency and motivation.

The present study employed an ex-post facto correlational research design. This research was driven by the researcher's curiosity about the relationship between motivation and writing skill. Hence, the researcher conducted a study titled "The Correlation between Motivation and Writing Skill of the Seventh-Grade Students of SMP Negeri 14 Denpasar in the Academic Year 2024/2025." The data for this study were collected using appropriate research

instruments, namely a questionnaire and a writing test.

The findings of the study, based on the correlational design, provide a more detailed understanding of the relationship between motivation and writing skills. By processing the data from these two variables motivation and writing skill the researcher was able to determine the significant correlation between them. This correlation became evident when calculating the scores for both variables. Additionally, throughout the research, it was observed that students with higher motivation found it easier and quicker to write paragraphs. Thus, it can be said that there is a significant correlation between writing skills and motivation.

Motivation is a crucial aspect of academic writing. In essence, motivation provides students with both internal and external strength, guiding them towards positive goals and encouraging them to create a well-structured written product. When students begin writing, they must first be motivated to write. This motivation helps them organize and express their ideas, opinions, or feelings more effectively, particularly when constructing a descriptive paragraph (Alzubi & Nazim, 2024). The present study found a significant correlation between motivation and writing skill. This confirms that motivation plays an essential role in enhancing writing skills, aligning with the assertion that motivation and writing ability are indeed closely related.

The research findings showed that, regarding the criteria for descriptive paragraphs, the majority of the samples were able to produce a descriptive paragraph that fulfilled the required standards. They were able to meet requirements for grammar, sentence structure, organization, format, content, punctuation, and mechanics. Punctuation and mechanics, content, organization, format, grammar, and sentence structure, however, were the criteria that were most frequently met.

Students with high motivation were able to effectively create a descriptive paragraph, fulfilling all the necessary criteria. On the other hand, students with low motivation faced difficulties in constructing a proper descriptive paragraph and were unable to meet the required criteria (Duha, 2023). Furthermore, educators can benefit from these findings since they offer a foundation for creating more successful and interesting teaching strategies that encourage motivation and enhance writing abilities. Understanding the role that motivation plays in the growth of writing, English language instructors can modify their teaching practices by introducing motivating techniques to support students while simultaneously enhancing their writing abilities.

This conclusion is supported by the results of the hypothesis testing, Pearson Product Moment Correlation, and T-test. The total scores for students' motivation (X) is 12,188, and for writing skill (Y) it is 9,624. These totals represent the sum of all individual scores across the students. On the other hand, the mean scores for motivation (X) is 99.90, and for writing skill (Y) it is 78.89. The mean score represents the average score of all the students in each category. The median scores for motivation (X) are 99.00, and for writing skill (Y) it is 78.00, with the median indicating the middle value when all students' scores are arranged in order. Additionally, the standard deviation (SD) for motivation (X) is 11.97, and for writing skill (Y) it is 8.91. These values show the extent of variation or spread in the students' scores. The current investigation is consistent with earlier studies that showed a relationship between writing proficiency and motivation. According to the results, the directional hypothesis that was first put forward has been verified: there is a substantial relationship between the seventh-grade students at SMP Negeri 14 Denpasar's writing proficiency and motivation in the academic year 2024–2025.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the findings of this study indicate a significant positive relationship between students' motivation and their writing proficiency among seventh-grade students at SMP Negeri 14 Denpasar during the 2024–2025 academic year. Although no experimental manipulation was applied, the observed correlation suggests that motivation plays a meaningful role in shaping students' writing performance. These results underscore the importance of fostering motivational strategies in the EFL classroom as part of efforts to enhance students' writing abilities. While the generalizability of the findings is limited to the sample studied, the implications highlight a potential direction for educators and curriculum developers to consider integrating motivation-enhancing practices as part of writing instruction to improve student outcomes. Further research involving experimental designs is recommended to establish causality and explore how specific motivational interventions may directly impact writing achievement.

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