



Research Article

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Improving the Quality of Students' Journal Articles Using Creative Writing to Develop Ideas, Citations, and Thesis Statements at UIN SAIZU Purwokerto

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Abstract

The goal of this study was to figure out the implementation of creative writing to improve the quality of students' journal articles in developing ideas, citations, and thesis statements. This study was conducted at UIN SAIZU Purwokerto, Central Java, Indonesia using a qualitative method based on phenomenological research. Observations, semi-structured interviews, and literature studies were used to collect the data in creative writing to develop ideas, citations, thesis statement, and article quality. The phenomenological data analysis technique is started by describing personal experiences and under-studied phenomena, followed by a list of important questions, assertions, and data analysis to draw conclusions. The results showed that the students should express new information from the developed ideas, citations, and thesis statements through creative writing. Creative writing does not only need to develop writing skills and the use of technology, but also promote novelty, preciseness, and certain styles to improve the quality of scientific publications. It was concluded that the development of ideas, citations, and thesis statements can increase the quality of students' journal articles in various ways depending on each student's ability and support from the lecturers by providing training and learning materials. It is expected that government and universities should not only focus on the implementation of technology and increasing number of publications, but also provide creative writing training, so that the quality of scientific writings produced by the Indonesian universities can be recognized all over the world.

Keywords: creative writing, idea development, citation, thesis statement, article quality

1. Introduction

Digital revolution in both academic and university settings has globally influenced the culture of scientific article writing and annually increased. Not only academicians but also students should be able to write scientific articles and publish them Internationally in reputable journals. The students' involvement in writing scientific articles is a means to assess the academic success at universities (Caruth, 2018). Recent studies reveal that students are required to publish their scientific articles to graduate (Darmalaksana & Busro., 2021). This is in line with the circular letter issued by many Indonesian universities to increase the quantity and quality of scientific works published by both bachelor and master degree students in both national and international levels. Based on the Minister

of Research, Technology and Higher Education Regulation Number 50 Year 2018 concerning the Amendment to the Minister of Research, Technology and Higher Education Regulation Number 44 Year 2015 on the National Standards for Higher Education, the goal is to develop science and technology as well as to increase the national competitiveness in Higher Education management and administration. The requiring scientific publication regulation potentially influences the quantity and quality of scientific works produced by Indonesian universities. This regulation was intentionally made for Indonesian academicians to catch up with others in producing scientific works (Astuti & Isharijadi, 2019).

Writing and publishing articles in reputable journals is actually not the only way to assess a someone's academic competencies, yet the visibility of publications may determine his/her reputation. Thus, universities continuously encourage academicians and students by conducting scientific paper writing training and learning, so that the students' scientific articles can be internationally published in reputable journals. with high-quality articles, those are expected not to be published in non-reputable journals considered as predatory and Scopus blacklisted-journals. According to Ma'rif & Fitriya (2021), scientific article writing training can improve the quality of students' articles. Innovative, integrated, and well-structured writing development can be used as patterns to support the students' writing skills (Gardner et al., 2018).

Although there are more than 3,200 universities in Indonesia, the publication performance is still low with small citation indexes. This indicates that the quality of scientific articles written by students has not met the scientific publication requirements (Wahyudi, 2019). the Ministry of Research and Technology/National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN) explains that one biggest challenge in scientific writing is the number of publications which is still limited when compared to the number of students. Thus, the research conducted by Indonesian academicians is still poorly recognized at international level. The quantity and quality of scientific articles published in both national and international journals are still insignificant. The students' awareness and willingness to publish their research in reputable journals are still low. Some universities have previously published their circular letters emphasizing the importance of scientific publications to boost the number of scientific publications, yet still ineffective due to the poor quality of students' scientific articles.

According to the Scopus data, Indonesia had 33,953 scientific articles at the ASEAN level in 2018, yet declined to 28,374 in 2019, lower than Malaysia, which had 28,404. Unfortunately, those publishing the articles are mostly lecturers, not the students (Astuti, 2019). The accredited journals have quantitatively increased, yet the quality of students' scientific publications is, in fact, still in the 3rd to 6th Sinta ranks (Republika, 2019). Indonesian government hopes that journal accreditation can improve the Indonesian universities' ranks at international level through citations. to increase citations, the quality of journals should be better encouraged (Djrisbang, 2018).

Greater opportunities to become researchers in Indonesia should be balanced with a good understanding for students as researchers to write scientific articles. According to Rakedzon & Baram-Tsabari (2017), students as potential scientists should be able to communicate and integrate their science to be accepted in scientific communities accomplished by publishing their scientific articles in reputable journals. According to the research conducted by Pangesti (2017), mind mapping approach was used to improve the capacity of scientific article writing and build the students' character education. Some previous studies on the development of students' scientific publication quality only focused on manuals, scientific writing training, and scientific article quality using technology. To support the quality of students' articles and scientific publications, Astuti & Isharijadi (2019) and Wahyuningsih et al. (2021), introduced Open Journal System (OJS) and Mendeley application. The most recent studies empirically investigated creativity models of students' scientific articles. The research conducted by Rosa et al. (2019) revealed that intensive training can support the teachers' creativity and innovation in writing scientific articles. Furthermore, the research conducted by Widyartono, Dawud, & Harsiati (2019) recommended a learning model of scientific article writing based on blended learning for non-native speakers.

State Islamic University (known as *UIN/Universitas Islam Negeri*) of Purwokerto is a center for

intellectual development supported by the Three Pillars of Higher Education (known as *Tridharma Perguruan Tinggi*), covering education, research, and community service based on Islamic values. Based on initial observations, UIN SAIZU Purwokerto has three main problems with the poor quality of students' scientific articles. First, students were not enthusiastic to participate in various scientific writing trainings, competitions, or workshops held by universities, government institutions, and private parties. Second, poor utilization of e-libraries as the sources of inspirations and creative ideas. Third, the students prefer assignments in the forms of discussion to writing scientific articles (Saad, 2020). Thus, deeper studies on the quality of Students' Journal Articles at UIN SAIZU Purwokerto should be further conducted. Some previous studies supported the future studies to improve the quality of scientific articles by including factors influencing the publication feasibility. Thus, this research focused on three main topics: the use of creative writing viewed from the development of ideas, citations, and thesis statement writing. The research novelty was on scientific article quality, because the previous studies had not investigated the relationship of those three main topics on the publication of students' scientific articles from Islamic universities, which characteristics are different from the other universities.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Scientific Articles

Theories related to the meanings of scientific writing have developed along with the research topics, objectives, methods, and theoretical frameworks, resulting in various new sciences. Scientific writing is an article obtained based on scientific nature based on observations, assessments, and certain research fields systematically organized using certain methods, and polite languages, scientifically accountable (Hamilton, 1992). There are various functions of scientific writing. First is educational function. The authors can learn writing principles, critical thinking, and responsibility to the results. Second is research to present new information after obtaining accurate data, processing the collected data, drawing conclusions, and then implementing the research results in social life situations. Third is functional purposes. It means that scientific writing can be used to improve knowledge as literature review materials to meet the needs of various scientific fields (Gupta & Manning, 2011). There are also some benefits of scientific writing for the authors (Winarto et al., 2016), such as 1) building effective reading skills; 2) introduction to various library activities accessed through internet; and 3) obtaining intellectual satisfaction when the scientific writing is accepted by many people. 4) broadening knowledge horizons shown by the quality scientific writing seen from the contents, objectives, and originality; 5) as research reference materials for future researchers; 6) systematically improving facts and data organization originated from obvious sources, valid data, and no plagiarism; and 7) training to combine the reading results from various literature sources.

Scientific writing can be divided into five categories. First and foremost, scientific writing which contains ideas or facts to persuade, convince, educate, and entertain the readers. Second, scientific writing which is based on field observations for educational purposes. Third, undergraduate thesis, graduate thesis, and dissertations are written explanations of students' research findings which have the originality values, and contents discussing specific phenomena using rules and difficulty levels in accordance with their educational levels. Fourth, a work paper is similar to article with a more detailed analysis. Fifth, a paper is a scientific writing type containing specific facts and arguments with a high validity level focusing only on analyzing specific subjects (Wcg, 2008). The scientific writing systematics consist of five stages: 1) planning, a stage to determine a topic, objectives, targets, and scopes; 2) disclosing, a stage to disclose supporting data, in the forms of research results, case studies, literacy studies, interviews, and field observations; 3) analyzing, a stage to process the data based on the formulated research questions in accordance with the research topics; 4) concluding, a stage to draw some important events shown after planning the scientific writing ; 5) implementation, a stage to systematically obtain the research benefits (Malmfors et al., 2003).

2.2 Scientific Article Writing Quality

Scientific articles are the results of research or ideas published and written in accordance with the scientific principles and ethics. It means that not only journals as publication sites, the quality of scientific articles is also important to consider in writing (Van Dalen & Henkens, 2001). There are five criteria to determine the quality of scientific articles: 1) novelty, the fields under study is relatively new and relevant to community needs; 2) offering significant contributions to society; 3) undergoing methodological processes; 4) no plagiarizing from previous scientific works; and 5) completed with honesty. Novelty is one of the most important criteria to evaluate the quality of scientific articles. Scientific articles should be in accordance with the related field. The quality of scientific articles also refers to relevant observations and objects to obviously observe the phenomena since there are basic sciences (Ortinou, 2011). Literature reveals that what is considered important in determining the quality of scientific writing is the presented discussion and the chosen topic. The more the uniqueness and meaningful the chosen topics with satisfying discussion, the more interesting the scientific articles will be (Harper, 2008). The research conducted by Slamet (2006) found that there is a positive relationship between article writing quality and research methodology course. The better the learning outcomes from research methodology courses, the better the scientific writing quality will be, and vice versa.

3. Method

3.1 Research Design

To improve the quality of students' journal articles, a qualitative research method with a phenomenological approach was used to collect the empirical data on creative writing activities, focusing on the development of Ideas, Citations, and Writing Thesis Statements. According to Creswell (2009), the phenomenological approach explains the meaning of concepts or phenomena consciously experienced by the participants. This approach is used to support the empirical facts based on the initial observations: (1) latent research data including the students' behavioral patterns in producing the scientific articles; (2) in terms of depth, this research revealed the students' experiences in creative writing in the form of developing ideas, citations, and writing thesis statements; and (3) the research focuses on how the students' experiences can create meaning. The research location was at UIN SAIZU Purwokerto, Central Java, Indonesia and conducted for three months starting from July 2021 to September 2021.

3.2 Samples and Population

The research population included students at 6th semester, lecturers teaching research methodology courses, and scientific article writing trainers at UIN SAIZU Purwokerto. There were 45 students (20 female students and 25 male students), 5 lecturers (male), and 2 scientific articles writing trainers participating in observations and interviews. Students at the 6th semester were taken as samples because they have completed the research methodology courses and attended the scientific article writing trainings at UIN SAIZU Purwokerto.

3.3 Research Data and Research Data Sources

The research data included both primary and secondary data. The primary data were directly obtained from the main sources. Meanwhile, the secondary data were collected by the researchers from the data sources available online and research documents/notes. The research data were collected using observations, semi-structured interviews, and literature studies. Observations were directly conducted at campus by collecting the data in the form of objects related to the university

conditions, students and lecturers joining the scientific article writing. Interviews were conducted after studying the research methodology courses and scientific article writing trainings. Interviews were also given to two scientific writing experts becoming the scientific article writing trainers at UIN SAIZU Purwokerto. Those were intended to encourage the students with good memories on research methodology courses and scientific article writing training to write and submit their articles to reputable journals.

3.4 Data Analysis Techniques

Moustakas (1994) developed the systematically structured data analysis methodologies for phenomenological research. The phenomenological data analysis stages start by identifying the research subjects and real contexts related to a phenomenon. The quality of students' journal articles was investigated in this research. Field data collection was then conducted, especially those obtained from the participants' experiences and field notes to describe the phenomena. Furthermore, important statements were collected for data analysis starting from preliminary investigations, data reductions, and data triangulations to eventually draw conclusions based on actual descriptions of phenomena. The researchers employed a triangulation technique to obtain more reliable data. Triangulation is a data analysis technique combining information from various sources previously determined by the researchers.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Improving the Quality of Students' Journal Articles Using Creative Writing to Develop Ideas at UIN SAIZU Purwokerto

The first finding is related to the use of creative writing to develop ideas and improve the quality of students' journal articles at UIN SAIZU Purwokerto. The findings revealed that creative writing based on the development of ideas was performed in many ways through several initial stages or known as prewriting where creative writing is able to generate ideas, eliminate ideas, and play with ideas to obtain the appropriate imagination. Every creator will develop an idea by thinking about something in a particular medium. Prewriting is usually messy and ideas may be scattered everywhere. For most students, messing up and ignorance to logic, patterns, or end-shapes is a freedom. The purpose of pre-writing scientific articles includes freedom to generate ideas. For students who are generally disturbed with untidiness, prewriting is commonly known as pre-planning to generate ideas and data to write essay drafts. Conversely, prewriting is an idea incubation stage to generate ideas and thoughts through writing. Consider data 1.

"The scientific article writing ideas are developed in various ways, and certain prewriting techniques to demonstrate numerous ways to develop ideas. Free writing, looking for ideas, grouping/mapping, and maintaining a personal journal are examples of creative prewriting to develop ideas. Other prewriting types are intended to help students revive and focus themselves on certain subjects by asking a question and making a list. Responding a text, maintaining a daily journal, and responding to a specific task provided by a lecturer are examples of prewriting to develop ideas in response to other people's thoughts."

Developing ideas in creative writing can be made by having free writing. Free writing can help students identify subjects attracting the students' interest. According to Hamilton (1992), each researcher must publish their research findings in high-quality journals. An individual must have good writing skills seen as a result after receiving the proper training. The development of creative writing should be well learned and written in simple ways. The authors should avoid the use of metaphors or anything possibly changing the scientific articles' styles or contexts. More specifically, the authors obviously and objectively developed ideas; so that all steps should be carefully taken,

particularly in elaboration to ensure that the article is in high quality and worth published. The students consciously recognize their interests, yet they haven't been able to identify. Thus, creative writing is expected to be able to develop ideas to improving the quality of students' articles based on their interests. Consider data 2.

"Students can write what comes to their mind in five minutes using a computer/laptop or paper, without thinking about perfection, good sentences, or right spelling or punctuation. Students must focus on writing down what they are thinking. Thus, a series of free writing exercises is made to help students grasp the connecting lines (repeatedly written ideas) drawing the students' interest. After the connecting lines are found, start looking for ideas/brainstorming to connect with a specific topic."

Jabri et al. (2021) explain that it is very important to gradually assess the learning processes to produce the quality articles. Students with positive attitudes are able to have the opportunities to correct their misunderstandings when writing ideas in a scientific article and to have corrected. To stimulate their abilities to express ideas, the students should preserve their article reading and writing cultures. The students are trained to write emphasizing more on growing interest and pleasure to develop their ideas. The students should master the correct writing rules while creating a comfortable learning atmosphere. So, it can be seen that based on the first finding, the use of creative writing to develop ideas can improve the quality of scientific article writing. To improve creative writing skills, it is necessary to pass various training processes and cycles. This means that creative writing skills to develop ideas require both contextual and continuous practices. The lecturers should pay more attention to the classroom environment to optimally succeed the learning processes.

4.2 *The Use of Creative Writing Seen from Citations to Improve the Quality of Students' Journal Articles at UIN SAIZU Purwokerto*

The second finding revealed that the use of creative writing in terms of citations requires skill development and ease the citation techniques. Furthermore, citation abilities are affected by the development of technology and appropriate more on students' ideas quoted in a scientific article. Supported with software and applications, such as Mendeley, Zotero, and Endnote, creative writing can optimally improve the quality of students' scientific articles. According to participants, the citations in creative writing are greatly essential. not only respecting other people's scientific writing, citations also have many benefits, such as improving the quality of article writing. Consider data 3.

"Citation is very important in journal article writing because it has many benefits, including (a) the author can convey the messages to the readers where the sources of sentences, ideas, and facts explained in the article are from; (b) not all references are in accordance with the expected research ideas, so that citations can provide a comparison of research ideas explained in the previous studies; (c) citations can help strengthen the ideas of the conducted research; and (d) citations can help strengthen the ideas of the conducted research."

From the interview results, the students can get the perspectives on ideas from the citations of previous studies. Citations can also increase the quality of scientific articles written using relevant sources from the recent national and international reputable journals to show the quality and originality of students' research. It is important to improve the article quality by making citations (Baethge et al., 2019). Citations are required when paraphrasing sentences, not only when taking words or research ideas and thoughts from other people's scientific writing. Rewriting the concepts and ideas in other sentences without affecting the meanings known as paraphrasing requires creative writing skills. A scholar should have the ability to write scientifically, and well master the proper scientific writing techniques. A student well mastering the art of writing scientific articles should have no problems with scientific article writing in the next education levels. Citations can be used to influence the scientific writing skills, including the presentation of various models and techniques to

identify important citations (Wang et al., 2020).

Thus, paraphrasing when citing the sources as a way to improve the creative writing is basically to compare and avoid plagiarism (Sari et al., 2021). According to the conducted observations, the culture of creative writing at UIN SAIZU Purwokerto is relatively good to improve the quality of students' journal articles since the lecturers have taught and provided knowledge related to the importance of citations. Furthermore, most student participants joining the scientific article writing training said that they have understood the benefits of citations and wanted to use the citations in their research articles. Consider data 4.

"By citing, we can compare research ideas to be more creatively putting ideas into a scientific article. Citation is understood as activities of taking one or more words from other people's scientific writing to strengthen the research findings written in the scientific articles. The proper citations may result in quality articles. Thus, citations should be able to provide information to the readers related to the authors, cited articles, and other important details."

Thus, it is necessary to develop the culture of writing research findings into articles to avoid bottleneck and valleys of death phenomena. Bottleneck phenomena are characterized by a poor relationship between number of citations, number of publications, and number of the conducted research activities. Valley of Death phenomena are the advanced development of bottleneck phenomena due to the shortage of marketable publications, so that innovative and entrepreneurial cultures should be continuously developed. There are many factors influencing the unpublished research results, including poor management of resources, time, money, and research motivation. The literature explains that all forms of citations included by the authors need to be paraphrased (Nurisani et al., 2019). Thus, it is expected that students will find more creative writing ideas from the many relevant and quality citations. In addition, it is necessary to develop the culture of scientific writing and research collaboration to become a complete study. Writing culture includes taking notes, reading, and critical analysis in creative thinking patterns. Scientific publications play an important role as the scientific accountability evidence of research results to be widely and globally recognized.

4.3 *The Use of Creative Writing to Improve the Quality of Students' journal articles Viewed from the Formulation of Thesis Statements at UIN SAIZU, Purwokerto*

The third finding revealed that the use of creative writing in formulating the thesis statements can improve the quality of students' journal articles. This is because creative writing can help students build and present good arguments. Creative writing skills are needed to build strong thesis statements reflecting what are actually discussed in the research. Thus, the quality of students' journal articles is expected to be highly qualified. To obtain maximum benefits, the thesis statements should focus on providing answers to the research questions, presenting specific statements, and proving facts without giving other people chances to disagree. Thus, the use of creative writing to formulate thesis statements should collaborate those related to objects leading to smaller and more specific problems. Consider data 5.

"Writing thesis statements has various benefits: (a) helping students demonstrate their mastery on the given materials and formal objects to develop arguments. (b) helping readers comprehend the researchers positions and recognize the researchers' knowledge on specific subjects; (c) helping readers comprehend the researchers' positions and recognize the researchers' specific fields of expertise; (d) not requiring submissions of any evidence because this position is simply intended to affirm the research objectives at early stages; and (e) informative and persuasive."

Based on the interview results with the lecturers, the students well obtained the benefits from writing the scientific articles given in the research methodology courses. Although some students had

the quality articles, yet not meeting the quality standards set in the guidelines for writing the scientific articles with the assessment score of <75 and categorized into adequately good. The assessment scores were based on three main aspects: Development of Ideas, Citations, and Thesis Statement Writing. (See table 1).

Table 1: Guidelines for Assessment Scores

95	-	100	=	A+	=	4.00	Very Good
90	-	94	=	A	=	3.71	
85	-	89	=	A-	=	3.70	Good
80	-	84	=	B+	=	3.25	
75	-	79	=	B	=	3.24	adequately Good
70	-	74	=	B-	=	2.75	
65	-	69	=	C+	=	2.50	Not Good

The creative writing scores of students' scientific articles are as follows:

Table 2: Students' Creative Writing Scores

No	Score	Total Students	Percentage
1	<75	39	86%
2	≥75	6	14%

Based on Table 1 and Table 2, it can be seen that the students' scores in creative writing were good, in which 39 (86%) students were able to creatively write, while the other 6 (14%) students were still classified into unsatisfactory/not good enough in understanding the creative writing. It is expected that the creative writing courses can improve the quality of students' journal articles. Consider data 6.

"Students' creative writing skills were adequately satisfying when viewed from the development of Ideas, Citations and Thesis Statement Writing. Students were able to understand sentence structures, word choices, and arrangement of proper paragraphs to express ideas based on the research topics. Thus, the students are expected to be able to improve the quality of their scientific article writing to express their creative ideas and cite the quality scientific articles."

Finally, creative writing frequently focuses on the students' articles resulted from the students' willingness to discover new knowledge originated from developing ideas, using citations, and formulating thesis statements to help creative practices, especially for articles they were working on. The previous studies explained that the creative writing research should be creative, critical, and in-depth study to improve the quality of scientific articles developed by authors (Harper, 2008). Creative writing learned through research methodology courses and scientific writing trainings help students improve the quality of their scientific articles (Slamet, 2006).

Creative writing is learned by emphasizing not only to develop writing but also promote novelty, preciseness, and distinguishing styles to result in quality scientific writing articles (Sovacool et al., 2018). Thus, this study showed the novelty in improving the quality of students' journal article writing, not only depending on language and technology as the previous research conducted by Astuti & Isharijadi (2019) and Wahyuningsih et al. (2021). To improve the quality journal article writing, students should be trained to develop their creative writing by developing ideas, using citations, and formulating thesis statements. Thus, intensive training can support creativity in writing a scientific article (Rosa et al., 2019). In addition, creative writing is naturally developed and student-centered. It should be underlined that culture is a strong foundation to conduct research up to the publication stage. However, there are various threats to reach the main goal including eliminating the instant cultural behaviors. Patience is greatly necessary in writing because writing is not an

instant process. A clear vision and roadmap are greatly required not only to publish scientific articles based on trends.

5. Conclusion

Based on the research results, creative writing, when viewed from the development of ideas, citations, and thesis statements, could increase the quality of Students' Articles at UIN SAIZU Purwokerto through various ways. The students willingly shared their knowledge after formulating ideas, using citations, and writing thesis statements in creative writing classes. Novelty, precision, and styles should be emphasized in creative writing. The writing results were highly dependent on each student's abilities. Each student's creative writing ability was basically different, yet developing ideas, using citations, and writing thesis statements helped students to communicate their sciences into good scientific articles. This research is expected to provide contributions to the government and universities focus not only on the use of technology and increasing the quantity of publications, but also on the development of ideas, citations, and thesis statements. Future studies are expected to identify factors influencing the quality of scientific articles using different research methods and broader scopes. Thus, it is expected that the resulted contributions can support the quality of scientific articles in Indonesian universities.

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