

## The Correlation Between Students' Reading Habits And Essay Writing Ability In EFL

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**Abstract.** *This correlational study explains the relationship between reading habits and essay writing abilities in 3rd semester students in the Essay Writing course. This research, which was conducted at a state Islamic religious institution in Indonesia, used a purposive sampling technique for English Language Education students using a quantitative approach using tests and evaluations based on essay rubrics from the international reading association NCTE for data collection. The normality test shows a non-normal distribution of the reading and writing variables. Shows a weak negative correlation between reading habits and essay writing ability. This discussion emphasizes the importance of understanding the different relationships between these variables, challenging common beliefs and encouraging further exploration in this area. These findings contribute to existing knowledge, indicating that in this study, reading habits did not have a significant effect on essay writing ability.*

**Keywords:** Reading habit, Essay Writing, Correlation analysis, EFL.

**Abstrak.** Pada studi korelasional ini menjelaskan hubungan antara kebiasaan membaca dan kemampuan menulis esai pada mahasiswa semester 3 dalam mata kuliah Essay Writing. Penelitian yang dilakukan di sebuah lembaga keagamaan Islam negeri di Indonesia ini menggunakan teknik purposive sampling terhadap mahasiswa Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris dengan menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif menggunakan tes dan evaluasi berdasarkan rubrik esai dari readwritethink asosiasi membaca internasional ncte untuk pengumpulan data. Uji normalitas menunjukkan distribusi yang tidak normal pada variabel membaca dan menulis. Menunjukkan korelasi negatif yang lemah antara kebiasaan membaca dan kemampuan menulis esai. Diskusi ini menekankan pentingnya memahami hubungan yang berbeda antara variabel-variabel ini, menantang keyakinan umum dan mendorong eksplorasi lebih lanjut di bidang ini. Temuan ini berkontribusi terhadap pengetahuan yang ada, menunjukkan bahwa pada penelitian ini, kebiasaan membaca tidak berpengaruh signifikan terhadap kemampuan menulis esai.

**Kata kunci:** Reading habit, Essay Writing, Correlation analysis, EFL.

### BACKGROUND

Reading is an activity that has many facets with various interpretations and purposes (Erkaboyeva & Bektoshev, 2021). Reading ability involves the capacity to comprehend written language, integrating various cognitive processes such as attention, memory, language, and visual processing into a complex skill (Wyman & Wendle, 1921). People have different reading habits influenced by things like personal interests, education, and resource availability (Sadeq Alsaedi et al., 2021). Building and sustaining robust reading habits is crucial for enhancing literacy skills and gaining knowledge across diverse subjects (Hassan et al., 2021). Various factors, such as individual cognitive differences, formal education, and socioeconomic status,

can influence reading ability (Zou, 2022). For reading ability, cognitive functions like attention, memory, and visual processing play crucial roles (Ye & Yuan, 2022).

Writing is a process or act of creating text or written work using words and symbols to convey ideas, information or expressions. Writing ability refers to the capacity of someone to produce written messages from words, into sentences, into text, into a coherent whole where the readers can understand the meaning (Wahyuning Imastuti, 2014). Writing is not only an activity of arranging words into the form of sentences but also conveying ideas by organizing them into a good text (Raja & Nurweni, 2019)

The ability to read and write has a central role in the development of language skills, critical thinking, and effective communication. A study found that integrated teaching of reading and writing skills can improve EFL students' achievement of critical thinking skills (Tilahun et al., 2022).

In the world of education, developing writing skills is often the main focus in the academic curriculum. Nevertheless, it should be emphasized that strong reading skills are an essential foundation for efficient writing. Therefore, this article will review the relationship between students' reading skills and writing abilities, especially in the context of essay writing courses. Through in-depth analysis, we will explore the extent to which reading proficiency influences the quality of students' writing and how the development of these two aspects can have a positive impact on higher education. A study found that incorporating extensive reading into reading lessons can improve students' reading abilities and improve English language proficiency (Tilahun et al., 2022).

This research will illustrate the importance of reading and writing as two competencies that support each other and provide valuable insights for educators, researchers and students, aiming to improve the quality of the teaching and learning process in essay writing courses. With a deeper understanding of these relationships, it is hoped that improvements in teaching and learning approaches at the tertiary level can be encouraged, which will ultimately support students' future academic and professional progress.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

### *Research design*

This research uses a correlational design and uses a quantitative approach. This design is to identify the relationship between students' reading and writing abilities in an essay writing course.

### *Population*

The participants in this research were 3rd semester university students at one of the state Islamic religious institutes in Indonesia. This research involved a sample of 28 students and used a purposive sampling technique with the following criteria: (1) English Education students and (2) Taking the Essay Writing course.

#### *Data collection*

This research uses tests to measure students' reading habits and writing abilities. Questionnaire include reading habits and text analysis. The questionnaire adaptation from (Molyneux, 2017) which is a reading interests and habits survey. For essay writing assessments, including tests and evaluation using the essay rubric, it is recommended to adopt the specified essay rubric from *readwritethink international reading association ncte*.

#### *Data analysis*

This research uses correlation statistics (such as Spearman's correlation coefficient) to determine the level of relationship between reading and writing abilities.

#### *Data processing*

Data is analyzed using statistical software is JASP or Jeffreys's Amazing Statistics Program (JASP Team, 2023).

## **RESULT**

### ***Correlation between variables***

Before determining the variables, a normality test is carried out to find out whether the data is normally distributed or not. Normality test is a normality test is a statistical procedure used to determine whether a set of data follows a normal distribution, which is a bell-shaped curve. The normal distribution is characterized by specific mathematical properties, such as symmetry and a particular pattern of spread. There are various statistical tests for normality, including the Shapiro-Wilk test, Anderson-Darling test, and Mardia's multivariate kurtosis test (Khatun, 2021). In this research, the Shapiro-Wilk test in JASP was used as an analysis of distribution data. The Shapiro-Wilk test is a common method for checking data normality (Aslam, 2021). The Shapiro-Wilk test statistic is derived by dividing the square of a suitable linear combination of sample order statistics by the standard symmetric estimate of variance (González-Estrada & Cosmes, 2019). If the significance value is above 0.05, the data distribution is considered normal; if it's below 0.05, the data distribution is deemed non-normal. The results of this research's normality data are shown in the table below.

**Shapiro-Wilk Test for Bivariate Normality**

		Shapiro-Wilk p	
Reading	- Writing	0.764	< .001

A significance value below 0.05 indicates non-normality in the data distribution. In this analysis, both Reading and Writing variables show p-values less than 0.001, suggesting a rejection of the null hypothesis of normality. The data is not normally distributed, so non-parametric methods are used as an alternative, for example Spearman (rho) or Kendall (tau) correlation coefficients (Goss Sampson, 2019) . In this study, Spearman (rho) was used as an alternative. Spearman's correlation coefficient is a statistical measure to assess the strength of a monotonic relationship between two variables (Kumar & Reddi, 2023). After that, to find out the correlation between the two variables, use Spearman's correlation coefficient in the JASP application. The results are shown in the table below.

**Spearman's Correlations**

		Spearman's rho p	
Reading	- Writing	-0.036	0.877

\* p < .05, \*\* p < .01, \*\*\* p < .001

The results of Spearman's correlation analysis showed that there was no significant relationship and a weak negative correlation between reading habits and essay writing ability (rho = -0.036, p = 0.877).

**DISCUSSION**

In the discussion section, we explore the implications and interpretation of the results obtained from the correlation analysis. The focus is on understanding the importance of non-normal distribution of data and the weak negative correlation observed between reading habits and essay writing ability. This is in line with research which finds that students' reading habits have no correlation with their writing abilities, even though students believe that reading contributes to writing, especially in vocabulary and gathering ideas (Winiharti & Suprato, 2020). Then, these findings are in line with research Noor et al. (2022).

Correlation does not necessarily indicate causation (Liang & Yang, 2021). Correlation refers to the statistical relationship between two variables, while causation refers to the relationship in which one variable causes another variable to change (Bhandari, 2023). This

statement aims to provide clarification that correlation only shows the statistical relationship between two variables without indicating cause and effect.

The relationship between reading habits and writing skills has been explored in various studies, shedding light on the complex dynamics between these two variables. Although the results of some studies do not support a significant correlation between reading habits and writing ability, they open the way for further exploration. Several relevant studies that contribute to existing knowledge about the relationship between reading habits and writing skills. The study sought to assess how reading habits and vocabulary mastery impact the English writing ability of high school students, with the findings revealing a notable combined influence of both factors on their writing skills (Yuspik et al., 2023). The study found a significant link between study skills, writing strategies, and reading habits in motivating senior high school students to learn the Filipino language (Franca & Napil, 2022).

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the results indicated a weak negative correlation ( $\rho = -0.036$ ,  $p = 0.877$ ), suggesting that, in this study, reading habits do not significantly influence essay writing ability. The complex dynamics between reading habits and writing abilities were explored, aligning with prior research that yielded similar results. Overall, the study contributes to the existing body of knowledge on the nuanced relationship between these variables, encouraging further exploration in this field.

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