

## The Influence of Diary Writing Activities on Academic Writing Skills

Shahna Fairuz Ahlandyta Nafeesha<sup>1✉</sup>, Dhuha Hadiyansyah<sup>2</sup>

Universitas Al-Azhar Indonesia<sup>1,2</sup>

✉ [shahnafairuzz@gmail.com](mailto:shahnafairuzz@gmail.com)

### Abstract:

This study aims to identify the influence of diary writing habits on writing skills among university students. Diary writing as a routine activity has the potential to improve several aspects of writing skills, such as vocabulary development, sentence structure, critical thinking, and creativity. With the development of technology and an increasingly dynamic lifestyle, diary writing can be an effective alternative in improving writing skills outside the academic context. This study uses a qualitative analysis method by collecting data through in-depth interviews with 15 informants who have regular experience in writing diaries. The data obtained from these interviews were then analyzed to determine the impact of diary writing habits on their writing skills, both in terms of vocabulary mastery, sentence structure, as well as improving critical thinking skills and creativity. The results showed that the habit of writing a diary can enrich students' vocabulary, improve their ability to compose more structured and effective sentences, and develop critical thinking and creativity in writing. In addition, this study also showed that the frequency and intensity of diary writing play an important role in the development of writing skills. The more frequently and consistently students write diaries, the more visible the improvement in their academic writing skills. This research is expected to provide deeper insights into the benefits of diary writing as one of the effective learning methods in the development of writing skills.

**Keywords:** Diary writing; academic writing; vocabulary improvement; critical thinking; creativity.

### INTRODUCTION

Diary writing is often assumed to be just a personal activity and a way to pass the time. However, it turns out that this activity has a significant impact on a person's writing ability. Writing is a creative and expressive activity in the process of conveying ideas on a piece of paper where this activity aims to produce good writing by each writer (M. Jakfar Is, 2015). Writing is also an important skill for students and even students. Because there are quite a lot of benefits and lessons that we can take. By writing, we can pour ideas and ideas into writing, and of course we can develop our vocabulary through the use of grammar, sentence structure and delivery of clear and effective messages. Writing can also help us in the critical thinking process, because there is freedom to channel expression into the writing we write (Diannita Ayu Kurniasih, 2020).

According to Mirnawati (2018), a person's linguistic intelligence will increase after being given the habituation of writing a diary book. It is also worth remembering that writing skills do not come by themselves in us, but it takes a habituation of writing through learning media such as diary books, it also takes time that is not instantaneous to get used to the routine in writing exercises, because this learning media can explore one's interest and ability in writing (T. Aisyah Hasanah et al., 2024).

Research relevant to the effect of diary writing habits on writing skills is a journal entitled "Habituation of Diary Writing to Improve Narrative Writing Skills for Fifth Grade Students of SD Negeri 2 Sukorejo" written by Diannita Ayu Kurniasih, this research uses a qualitative approach with a class action research method at the beginning of the 2018/2019 school year through the development of bestpractice that the author applies at his school. Based on Diannita Ayu Kurniasih's research, it states that the research convinces that the students taught by her school are applied to the habit of students writing a diary or diary as a mandatory weekly assignment, and this is one of the alternatives carried out to overcome and practice students in the school in their writing skills. In this research, there are similarities and differences with the research I conducted. The similarities are both discussing and about the habituation of diary writing. The difference is that the research raises facts from students in Class V of SD Negeri 2 Sukorejo only. While this research analyzes the influence of diary writing among students.

The purpose of this study is to describe the diary writing habit adopted by university students and analyze its impact on their writing skills, both in academic and personal contexts. This study also aims to understand the extent to which diary writing activities can help students develop their writing style, enrich their vocabulary, and how this activity can improve critical thinking and creativity in their writing skills. With this research, it is hoped that it can provide new insights into the importance of writing exercises as one of the methods that is quite effective and can be an alternative in learning to write more interestingly. It also contributes to the development of students' writing skills in various aspects, both in academic and non-academic writing.

In addition, this study also aims to understand the impact of diary writing activities on students' writing skills. Everyone has a different writing style, depending on their experiences, interests, and habits in writing. By writing a diary regularly, students can get to know and develop their own writing style, so that their writing becomes more unique and has its own character.

## **METHOD**

The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative, this method is to identify how influential the habit of diary writing is on writing skills among university students. This method allowed the researcher to explore the influence of diary writing habit in depth and understand its impact on students' writing skills. Data was collected through a questionnaire given to several respondents who had experienced diary writing, with the aim of finding out the relationship between the habit and their writing ability.

The qualitative concept is used because it can explore information in more detail about students' personal experiences and reflections related to diary writing habits. According to Creswell (2014), qualitative methods are suitable for research that focuses on understanding complex phenomena, where data is not only analyzed based on numbers, but also on aspects of meaning and context. Therefore, the questionnaire used was designed to explore respondents' ideas and experiences in depth.

A limitation of this study is that the questionnaire was only given to those who have had a previous diary writing habit. This was done to ensure that the respondents had enough experiences to provide accurate and relevant information related to the effect of diary writing habit on their writing ability. In addition, the answers obtained will be categorized based on the length of time, frequency, and intensity of diary writing, which will help in identifying patterns that emerge from the habit. As said by Patton (2015), qualitative can provide deeper insights into human experience through systematic analysis of the data obtained.

With this method, the research is expected to provide greater insight into the benefits of diary writing, especially in developing writing skills academically and personally, as well as contributing to the development of more effective learning methods.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

Through a questionnaire distributed online using Google Form, the majority of respondents recognized that diary writing has a significant role in improving several aspects of writing skills. Some of the aspects that have improved include a wider and more varied vocabulary selection, better sentence construction, strengthening critical thinking skills, and increasing creativity in academic and non-academic writing. The following are the results of the analysis of each of these aspects:

## **Vocabulary Improvement**

A review of the questionnaire results showed that 12 out of 15 respondents were agreed that the habit of writing a diary had a significant impact on the improvement of vocabulary usage, increasing and enrichment. Writing regularly not only helps a person to express ideas, but also allows them to enlarge and enrich their vocabulary. Research by Ni et al. (2015) showed that the habit of writing a diary regularly can help students recognize and apply new vocabulary in more diverse contexts. This is in line with Brown's (2003) research which highlights that the use of proper vocabulary in writing is very important to improve overall writing skills. According to Brown, writing skills develop with continuous practice, including through diary writing activities, which provide opportunities to hone the ability to choose appropriate vocabulary. Moreover, Tarigan (2011) also highlights that the use of varied vocabulary can improve the quality of writing, both in terms of the clarity of the message presented and the attractiveness of the writing itself. This shows that the richer the vocabulary used, the better the quality of the writing produced.

Research conducted by Widodo (2017) shows that one of the effective ways to improve vocabulary mastery is through writing habits, where writers can practice recognizing various kinds of words and their meanings. In addition, research by Hanania and Akram (2020) showed that by writing regularly, students or learners can gain a deeper language experience, which affects the way they choose and use vocabulary in writing. These findings further strengthen the opinion that diary writing is one of the effective methods to enrich vocabulary. Research by Yusuf (2018) also adds that regular diary writing can expand vocabulary control in a more personalized context, as writers are likely to use words that are more in line with their life experiences. This process leads to a wider vocabulary knowledge, not only limited to language theory, but also to practical use in daily life. Thus, the increase in vocabulary gained from diary writing not only supports general writing skills, but also enhances one's ability to convey ideas and messages more clearly and effectively, as suggested by several recent studies.

## **Improvement in Sentence Building Ability**

In this aspect, based on the results of the questionnaire, 12 out of 15 respondents agreed and argued that writing exercises can help them enrich their vocabulary, writing

diaries also contribute to improving students' ability to compose good and correct sentences. Writing is one of the productive skills that is very important to master from an early age. According to Tarigan (2008), in modern life, writing skills have a very important role and characterize an educated nation. However, writing skills do not just appear, but must be acquired through consistent practice. Nunan (1991) emphasizes that before writing, one needs to train oneself in composing sentences with the correct structure as well as understanding the applicable grammar rules. Diary writing provides an opportunity for students to continue practicing in organizing their ideas into clear and structured sentences. This process involves various supporting skills, such as how to spell correctly (Yusuf, Mustafa, & Alqinda, 2017), connecting vocabulary to everyday life (Post & Rathet, 1996), as well as implementing various writing activities, both inside and outside the classroom (Xu, 2018).

In the context of constructing sentences in accordance with language rules, students need to understand several important elements, such as the function of words in a sentence, the correct use of subject-predicate order, the correct use of time, and the difference between active and passive sentences (Kurniadi, 2018). Writing a diary regularly provides practical experience for students in honing this skill. By getting used to writing down various experiences in the diary, they indirectly learn how to construct more effective sentences, avoid grammatical errors, and improve the cohesiveness between sentences in a paragraph.

### **Improvement in Critical Thinking Ability**

The results also show that 12 out of 15 respondents believe and also think that the habit of writing a diary contributes to improving students' critical thinking skills. Critical thinking skills are important in the academic world because they can help students evaluate information, develop logical arguments, and produce more analytical writing. In the process of writing a diary, a person not only writes down the events experienced, but also reflects and evaluates the experience. This reflection process trains students to think more deeply about the events they have experienced, develop arguments based on their personal point of view, and draw conclusions from the experiences they have gone through. In other words, diary writing is not only a means to express feelings, but can also be used as a critical thinking exercise that is useful in the academic world and everyday life.

In addition, critical thinking is also closely related to analytical and problem-solving skills. When students write a diary, they are unconsciously building a more systematic mindset in analyzing an event or situation. This is certainly very useful in an academic context, especially in writing essays, research reports, or other academic assignments that demand strong and structured arguments. In addition, diary writing can also improve students' critical thinking skills. In the process of writing a diary, a person will get used to reflecting back on the experiences and events they have experienced, as well as analyzing various aspects related to the experience. This reflection process will train a person to think more critically about the various situations they face, and help them develop a broader and more objective perspective. Thus, the habit of writing a diary is not only beneficial in improving writing skills, but also plays a role in developing a more critical and analytical mindset.

Aside from improving writing and critical thinking skills, diary writing also contributes to improving one's creativity in writing. Creativity is one of the important aspects in the world of writing, both in academic and non-academic contexts. By writing a diary regularly, one will get used to expressing their ideas and feelings in a more creative and interesting way. They can experiment with different language styles, sentence structures, and storytelling techniques. This will help them develop more varied and innovative writing skills.

### **Creativity Improvement in Academic Writing**

And in this aspect, based on the results of the questionnaire, it shows that all respondents, namely 12 out of 15 respondents, also think that with writing exercises, it can help them in the future in academic writing skills. Another aspect that has also improved through the habit of writing a diary is creativity in writing. Each individual has a different level of creativity, but creativity can be developed through consistent practice. Creativity in writing refers to a person's ability to generate new ideas, arrange words in an interesting way, and convey messages more expressively and communicatively (Putri Dahliana et al., 2018). Diary writing gives students the freedom to express themselves without any restrictions or rigid rules, as usually found in academic writing. This freedom allows them to experiment more with language style, writing structure, and techniques for conveying ideas. Thus, they can develop a more unique and personal writing voice and style.

In an academic context, creativity is needed, especially in writing essays, scientific articles, or other written works. Students who are accustomed to writing diaries tend to

have more flexibility in developing their ideas, composing more interesting arguments, and writing in a more engaging style. This makes their academic writing more lively, less monotonous, and easier for readers to understand. In addition, writing exercises can also help overcome writer's block, which is often experienced by students when they have to write academic assignments. By getting used to writing regularly, they become more accustomed to pouring ideas into writing, so they no longer feel burdened or have difficulty in starting a piece of writing.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of this research, it can be concluded that the habit of writing a diary has a positive influence on various aspects of students' writing skills. The most visible improvements include vocabulary mastery, better sentence construction skills, development of critical thinking skills, and increased creativity in academic writing. With these significant benefits, diary writing can be an effective writing practice method for students. In addition, this study also highlights the importance of writing habits as part of the learning process. By making diary writing a regular habit, students can not only improve their writing skills but also develop a more critical, analytical and creative way of thinking. Therefore, it is hoped that the habit of diary writing can be more actively introduced and applied in the academic world as one of the useful learning strategies.

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