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The Correlation between Reading Habit and Descriptive Writing Achievement: A Case of Eighth Grade Students of Junior High Schools in Palembang

Aliya Sekar Sari[*1], Annisa Astrid[2], Deta Desvitasari[3]*

[1,2,3]English Study Program, Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teaching Sciences, Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Fatah Palembang

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Correspondence

E-mail: aliyasekarsari5@gmail.com

A B S T R A C T

The aim of this study was to examine the relationship between eighth-grade students' reading habits and their descriptive writing achievement in Palembang. The participants consisted of students from two junior high schools, and the study used a correlational research design. Data were gathered through a reading habit questionnaire and a descriptive writing test. To analyze the relationship, the Pearson Product Moment Correlation was employed. The findings showed a significant correlation between the two variables, with a p-value of < 0.001 and a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.316, indicating a moderate positive relationship. This means that students with stronger reading habit tend to achieve better results in descriptive writing. In addition, regression analysis demonstrated a significant positive effect of reading habit on descriptive writing achievement ($p < 0.001$), with an R-squared value of 0.100, suggesting that reading habit accounted for 10% of the variance in students' writing scores. These results highlight the importance of fostering reading habit to support writing achievement, while also pointing to the need for future studies to investigate other factors that may influence students' writing achievement.

INTRODUCTION

Writing is an essential skill for mastering English. It serves as a way to convey knowledge and ideas effectively, enabling clear communication and helping others comprehend and learn from the information shared. Merjen and Kassymova (2019) stated that writing is the production of the ideas expressed in the written form. Since writing is the act of transmitting knowledge in print, the students must have information to share before students write (Suskie, 2018). Therefore, the students should have information before writing because sufficient information will help them construct strong arguments and ensure that the content presented is accurate and relevant.

Among the various writing genres taught at the junior high school level, students are instructed to study one of the written English texts is descriptive text. Descriptive text consists of descriptions of animals, persons, things, places, etc. (Ushchapovska, 2020). Descriptive text is important because it creates feelings and provides new experiences. It expresses an experience that the reader can actively participate in by using imagination (Widya et al., 2018). However, many Indonesian junior high school students still struggle to organize ideas, use appropriate vocabulary, and apply grammar accurately in their descriptive texts, which often leads to low writing achievement.

To improve students' descriptive writing, one crucial factor to consider is their reading habit. Reading habit plays a significant role in developing writing skills. Linuwih and Winardi (2020) showed that reading

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habit is regarded as the most influencing factor in writing since people usually find out new ideas, facts, information, knowledge, and experience from reading activities. Reading encourages creativity, helps students come up with new ideas, and provides students with new knowledge about a variety of subjects. Through reading, students are encouraged to be more creative, gain broader perspectives, and enrich their vocabulary, which ultimately supports their ability to express ideas effectively in written form. One of the most important habit for improving English proficiency is reading, since a habit is something practiced regularly and continuously. Wahyudi (2016) stated that habit is a mental process of a means of thinking, which means cultivating a strong reading habit does not only improve language competence but also strengthens students' capacity to think critically and organize ideas in writing.

This study's main goal is to find out how reading habit and descriptive writing proficiency relate to one another among Palembang junior high school students in the eighth grade. The study primarily aims to measure students' reading habit, evaluate their descriptive writing performance, examine the relationship between these two factors, and determine the extent to which students' reading habit impact their descriptive writing abilities. Previous research generally reported a significant positive correlation between reading habit and writing performance or overall academic achievement across various educational levels. At the junior high school level, found moderate to strong correlations, showing that reading habit positively influence writing achievements in junior high students (Yohana et al., 2021; Firdaus et al., 2023; Yana, 2024). Wati (2021) also reported a strong correlation at the senior high school level, indicating a positive relationship between reading habit and writing ability in senior high school students. At the university level. All found strong, significant correlations between reading habit and academic or writing performance (Erlina, 2019; Merjen & Kassymova, 2019; Linuwih & Winardi 2020; Rijal & Efendi, 2024). Hassan et al. (2021) also found a strong positive relationship between reading habit and reading performance among secondary school students. However, Noor et al. (2022) found a weak and non-significant negative correlation among university students, showing no meaningful relationship in their context. Overall, most studies reported moderate to strong positive correlations, with only a few exceptions reporting weak or no significant correlation.

While these studies provide important insights, most were conducted at the senior high school or university level, with limited attention given to junior high school contexts, particularly in Palembang. Therefore, his study aims to fill this gap by concentrating specifically on eighth-grade students in Palembang. Unlike previous research, which has predominantly explored higher educational levels, this study provides empirical evidence at the junior high school level within the local context of Palembang. This novelty highlights both the educational level and geographical setting as its main contribution. Based on the theoretical and empirical evidence, it is hypothesized that there is a significant positive correlation between reading habit and descriptive writing achievement.

Literature Review

Writing

Writing is an essential language skill that functions as both a creative and purposeful act. Writing ability is the skill to express ideas, thoughts, and feeling to other people in written symbols to make other people or readers understand the ideas conveyed (Helaluddin & Awalludin, 2020). Since writing is the act of transmitting knowledge in print, the students, therefore, must have information to share before the students write (Suskie, 2018). Writing is not only about expressing ideas but also about processing and organizing information in a logical.

During the language acquisition process, developing writing skills requires understanding both its types and key aspects. According to Brown and Abeywickarama (2019), writing can be categorized into four types: imitative, intensive, responsive, and extensive writing, each demanding different levels of control and creativity. In addition, they emphasize five essential aspects of writing, specifically: organization, content vocabulary, mechanic, and language use. These aspects ensure that students produce writing that is clear, coherent, and accurate, allowing them to communicate ideas effectively and engage readers meaningfully. Therefore, developing writing skills is fundamental for EFL learners, as it not only enhances their academic performance but also supports their ability to express knowledge and

experiences in meaningful ways.

Descriptive Text

Among the various types of writing, descriptive text plays a central role in the English curriculum for junior high school students. Descriptive text is a key type of writing that enables students to convey detailed ideas clearly and communicate them effectively. Descriptive text consists of descriptions of animals, persons, things, places, etc (Ushchapovska, 2020). A descriptive text or description paragraph is a text or paragraph that contains a description of the nature of the object to be described or told (Permanasari, 2017). It can be concluded descriptive writing conveys an object's characteristics such as a person, animal, or place, so readers can clearly understand.

Descriptive text, as a basic form of writing, helps students improve their writing skills and express ideas in detail. According to Baresh (2022), descriptive texts usually consist of two main components: identification, which introduces and identifies the subject, and description, which elaborates on its characteristics, appearance, behavior, and distinguishing features. The purposes of descriptive writing include entertaining the reader, expressing emotions, relating experiences, providing information, fostering appreciation, and persuading readers.

Reading Habit

Reading is an important activity that connects the writer and the reader, allowing knowledge to be acquired and processed through meaningful interaction. The term reading habit refers to the behavior which expresses the likeness of reading of individual types of reading, and tastes of reading (Adesola, 2017). Reading habit from a psychological perspective involves regular, intentional reading that supports knowledge acquisition, cognitive development, and personal growth, shaped by motivation, attitude, and comprehension. Reading habit also are influenced by intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, positive attitudes toward reading, academic success, and supportive environments, including family and school (Schmidt & Retelsdorf, 2016).

In EFL classrooms, Davidovitch et al. (2016) stated that reading habit is acquired at an early age, between kindergarten and elementary school and are one of the main foundations for developing language skills. One of important conference for teachers of second or foreign language reading is how to make students' reading clasess interesting and relevant for students (Setiyadi et al., 2018). Teachers can teach reading techniques such as speed reading, skimming and scanning to help students understand texts better. With good reading habit, EFL students can improve students' language skills and be more active in learning. Therefore, cultivating good reading habit is essential for supporting students' writing achievement, particularly in descriptive writing, where detailed expression and accurate language use are required.

METHOD

This study examined the connection between students' reading habit and their proficiency in descriptive writing using a quantitative correlational design. Correlational designs represent a form of non-experimental research where the researcher examines and quantifies the strength and direction of correlational statistical techniques to determine the relationship between two or more variables or sets of scores (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This method was suitable for addressing the research question, which aimed to determine whether students with stronger reading habit also showed better performance in descriptive writing.

The participants consisted of 120 eighth grade students from two junior high schools in Palembang during the academic year 2025/2026. The students were selected using convenience sampling because they were accessible to the researcher and had already received instruction in descriptive text writing in their English classes. Moreover, eighth-grade students were considered appropriate for this study since they are at a stage where they are already familiar with descriptive text as part of the curriculum but are still in the process of developing their writing skills. The participants were selected by the teachers at the schools where the study was conducted.

Before the data were collected, the researcher asked permission from the school and also requested consent from the students. The participation of the students was completely voluntary, and they were informed that there would be no negative consequences if they chose not to take part. The students were also assured that all of their answers would be kept private, used only for research purposes, and would not affect their school grades or evaluation in any way.

Data Collection

Two instruments were used: a questionnaire to assess students' reading habit and a descriptive writing test to evaluate their writing achievement.

Students' Reading Habit Questionnaire

The students' reading habit was assessed using a questionnaire consisting of 15 items adapted from (Tok et al., 2015). The questionnaire was presented in both English and Indonesian to minimize misunderstanding and ensure clarity. A five-point Likert scale was applied, ranging from Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Undecided (3), Disagree (2), to Strongly Disagree (1). The instrument measured three main factors: (1) reflection of books to skills (7 items), (2) relationship established with books (5 items), and (3) retelling information from books (3 items).

Students' Descriptive Writing Test

In this study, the test served as the instrument to assess students' achievement in descriptive writing. Students received clear instructions to compose a paragraph on one of six topics: describing about yourself, a favorite person, a favorite food, a favorite drink, a bedroom, or a school. Students selected one of these topics to write a well organized descriptive text. As part of this test, students wrote a concise and detailed descriptive paragraph ranging from 100-150 words. The test was administered within a time limit of 45 minutes. The writing was scored using a rubric adapted from Brown and Abeywickarama (2019) based on the following indicators: topic sentence, details, organization, concluding statement, and spelling/grammar.

Validity and Reliability

The validity of the instruments was confirmed through two approaches. The reading habit questionnaire, adapted from Tok et al. (2015), had been validated using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) The CFA confirmed that the reading habit scale had a good model fit. The results showed $\chi^2/df = 2.143$ (acceptable, < 3), GFI = 0.932, CFI = 0.956, RMSEA = 0.058 (< 0.08), and SRMR = 0.037 (< 0.05) which showed that the 15 items were consistent with three factors and demonstrated a good model fit.

The descriptive writing test was validated through content validation by two English lecturers. They reviewed the test specification, topics, format, and scoring criteria to ensure that the instrument was relevant, aligned with the curriculum, and appropriate for assessing students' descriptive writing achievement.

The reliability of the reading habit questionnaire was evaluated through a pilot test involving 30 students who were not part of the main sample. The analysis showed a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.756, indicating that the questionnaire had good internal consistency and was reliable.

Regarding the descriptive writing assessment, two English lecturers independently scored the students' writings. The inter-rater reliability, measured using Cohen's Kappa, yielded a coefficient of 0.794, which is considered to indicate moderate agreement, demonstrating that the scoring process was consistent and dependable.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics including frequency, mean, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum were used to analyze the data and provide an overview of the reading habit and descriptive writing abilities of the students. Prior to testing the hypothesis, the assumptions for parametric analysis were confirmed to be met by normality (using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test) and linearity (using ANOVA) checks.

The Pearson Product-Moment correlation was used to investigate the connection between students' reading habit and their proficiency in descriptive writing in order to evaluate the hypothesis. Regression

analysis was used to ascertain the extent to which students' reading habit may predict their performance in descriptive writing when there was a substantial association. SPSS version 27 was used for all statistical methods.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Reading Habit

Descriptive statistics showed that students' reading habit scores ranged from 58.67 to 97.33, with a mean of 78.21 and a standard deviation of 8.50. Most students (54.2%) demonstrated a moderate reading habit, 23.3% had high reading habit, and 22.5% were categorized as low. This indicated that while most students engaged moderately in reading activities, some required additional support to foster stronger reading habit.

Table 1. Descriptive Analysis of Reading Habit

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Reading_Habit	120	58,67	97,33	78,2113	8,50236
Valid N (listwise)	120				

Table 2. Distribution of Students' Reading Habit

Reading_Habit

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Low	27	22,5	22,5	22,5
	Moderate	65	54,2	54,2	76,7
	High	28	23,3	23,3	100,0
	Total	120	100,0	100,0	

Descriptive Writing Achievement

The students' descriptive writing scores varied between 70.0 and 97.5, with an average of 88.25 and a standard deviation of 7.33. Most students (56.7%) attained high scores, 34.2% were in the moderate range, and 9.2% fell into the low category. These findings indicate that while the majority of students demonstrated strong writing skills, additional support may be needed for those with lower performance.

Table 3. Descriptive Analysis of Descriptive Writing Achievement

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Descriptive_Writing_ Achievement	120	70,00	97,50	88,2500	7,33788
Valid N (listwise)	120				

Table 4. Descriptive Analysis of Descriptive Writing Achievement

Descriptive_Writing2

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Low	11	9,2	9,2	9,2
	Moderate	41	34,2	34,2	43,3
	High	68	56,7	56,7	100,0
	Total	120	100,0	100,0	

Result of Normality and Linearity Tests

The Kolmogorov-smirnov test indicated that both reading habit ($p = 0.094$) and descriptive writing achievement ($p = 0.205$) were normally distributed. Linearity testing showed a significant

linear relationship between the two variables ($p < 0.001$), with no deviation from linearity ($p = 0.731$), confirming that linear-based analyses were appropriate.

Table 5. The Normality Test of Reading Habit

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

			Reading_Habit
N			120
Normal Parameters[a,b]	Mean		78,2113
Valid N (listwise)	Std. Deviation		8,50236
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute		,075
	Positive		,075
	Negative		-,075
Test Statistic			,075
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)[c]			,091
Monte Carlo Sig. (2-tailed)[d]	Sig.		,094
	99% Confidence Interval	Lower Bound	,086
		Upper Bound	,101
a. Test distribution is Normal			
b. Calculated from data.			
c. Lilliefors Significance Correction			
d. Lilliefors's method based on 10000 Monte Carlo samples with starting seed 926214481			

Table 6. The Normality test of Descriptive Writing Achievement

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

			Descriptive_Writing2
N			120
Normal Parameters[a,b]	Mean		,0000000
Valid N (listwise)	Std. Deviation		6,96136917
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute		,080
	Positive		,059
	Negative		-,080
Test Statistic			,080
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)[c]			,060
Monte Carlo Sig. (2-tailed)[d]	Sig.		,058
	99% Confidence Interval	Lower Bound	,052
		Upper Bound	,064
a. Test distribution is Normal			
b. Calculated from data.			
c. Lilliefors Significance Correction			
d. Lilliefors's method based on 10000 Monte Carlo samples with starting seed 624387341			

Table 7. The Linearity Test

ANOVA Table

		Sums of Squares	df	Mean Square	f	Sig.
Descriptive_Writing*	Between group (Combined)	1724,569	25	68,983	1,604	,054
Reading_Habit	Within Groups	4042,250	94	43,003		
	Total	5766,819	119			

The Correlation between Reading Habit and Descriptive Writing Achievement

The Pearson correlation revealed a strong positive relationship between reading habit and descriptive writing achievement ($r = 0.316$, $p < 0.001$). This indicated that students with better reading habit tended to achieve higher scores in descriptive writing.

Table 8. The Result of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Research

Correlations

		Reading_Habit	Descriptive_Writing
Reading_Habit	Pearson Correlation	1	,316**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<,001
	N	120	120
Descriptive_Writing	Pearson Correlation	,316**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	
	N	120	120

The Contribution between Reading Habit and Descriptive Writing Achievement

The results of a simple linear regression analysis revealed that reading habit significantly predicted students' descriptive writing achievement, accounting for 31.6% of the variance in scores ($R^2 = 0.316$, $B = 0.273$, $t = 3.621$, $p < 0.001$). This means that for each one-point increase in reading habit, students' writing scores improved by 0.273 points. These findings demonstrate that reading habit is a significant and moderately strong predictor of descriptive writing performance, emphasizing its key role in enhancing students' writing achievement.

Table 9. The Regression Test

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,316[a]	,100	,092	6,99080
a. Predictorts: (Constant), Reading_Habit				
b. Dependent Variable: Descriptive_Writing				

Table 10. The Regression Test

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sums of Squares	df	Mean Square	f	Sig.
1	Regression	640,681	1	640,681	13,110	<,001[b]
	Residual	5766,891	118	48,871		
	Total	6407,500	119			
a. Dependent Variable: Descriptive_Writing						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Reading_Habit						

Table 11. The Regression Test

Coefficients[a]

Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	Constant	66,906	5,929		11,284	<,001
	Reading_Habit	,273	,075	,316	3,621	<,001
	Total	6407,500	119			
a. Dependent Variable: Descriptive_Writing						

The purpose of this discussion is to interpret the significance of the findings in relation to the research

question of whether students' reading habit correlate with their descriptive writing achievement. The results confirmed a positive and significant correlation, meaning that students who read more frequently and purposefully tended to achieve higher scores in descriptive writing. This outcome highlights that reading habit are not only supportive but central to developing essential writing skills such as idea generation, vocabulary use, and text organization. In other words, reading functions as a foundation for descriptive writing achievement.

These findings are in line with a wide body of prior research. Khoirunnisa (2018) argued that reading is a crucial step in the writing process because it enables writers to gather information and shape their ideas. Linuwih & Winardi (2020) also pointed out that students gain new ideas, knowledge, and experiences from reading, which directly support their ability to compose written texts. Similarly, Yohana et al. (2021) found that students with strong reading habit produced more coherent and clear descriptive texts, as their exposure to language references helped them achieve greater accuracy and clarity. Juriati et al. (2018) further emphasized that good reading comprehension contributes to the ability to compose well-structured descriptive texts with logical idea development. Taken together, these studies reinforce the central role of reading in shaping students' writing performance.

The study's conclusions also highlight how crucial vocabulary is to improving writing abilities. Grabe and Stoller (2020) stated that vocabulary mastery is essential for writing achievement, as it supports comprehension, syntactic awareness, and stylistic expression. In line with this, Solanki and Patoliya (2024) stressed that reading improves writing quality by enriching vocabulary, critical thinking, and stylistic expression. The findings of this study confirm these views, as students with stronger reading habit were able to describe objects, places, and events with greater detail, supported by richer vocabulary and better understanding of context.

Beyond vocabulary, the present study also underscores the importance of continuous reading and writing practices. Pham (2021) argued that consistent reading enhances comprehension, which in turn strengthens writing skills. This study's findings align with those perspectives, indicating that regular reading not only develops language knowledge but also strengthens the process of organizing ideas in descriptive form. Moreover, Celik (2020) highlighted that successful writing contributes positively to students' academic, social, and psychological aspects, suggesting that the benefits of reading and writing extend beyond language ability to broader personal development.

In addition to confirming what has been reported in previous literature, this study advances new insights by focusing specifically on the contribution of reading habit to descriptive writing achievement. The results indicate that students who read regularly and with purpose are more capable of writing descriptions that are clear, accurate, and detailed. This highlights that descriptive writing achievement is strongly tied to reading exposure, particularly in developing the ability to notice details and present information in a logical and engaging way. Therefore, the findings imply that teachers should not only encourage students to read more but also integrate reading activities into writing lessons, such as analyzing descriptive texts before writing tasks. This integration can help students internalize language patterns and text organization, ultimately improving their writing achievement.

However, this study is not without limitations. Since the participants were limited to eighth-grade students from only two junior high schools in Palembang, the findings may not be fully generalizable to other grade levels or regions. Therefore, any attempt to apply these results to different contexts should be made with caution.

For future research, it is recommended to expand the scope by involving more schools or a larger number of participants, so the results can be generalized more broadly. The researchers could also investigate other grade levels to see whether the correlation between reading habit and descriptive writing achievement is consistent across various grades. In addition, it is suggested to examine whether similar patterns occur in other writing genres, such as narrative or argumentative texts, or across different grade levels. This would provide a broader understanding of how reading habit contribute to various aspects of students' writing achievement.

CONCLUSION

This study looked at the connection between Palembang eighth-grade students' reading habit and their proficiency in descriptive writing. The results showed a significant positive correlation, meaning that students with stronger reading habit generally performed better in descriptive writing tasks. Additionally, regression analysis revealed that reading habit significantly influenced students' writing performance, although other factors also contributed.

These results emphasize the importance of fostering good reading habit among junior high school students, as consistent exposure to reading materials can enhance vocabulary, sentence structure, and overall writing quality. While the contribution of reading habit was substantial, the findings also suggest that other factors, such as teaching strategies, writing practice, and motivation, may play important roles in shaping students' writing achievement. Future research is encouraged to examine additional factors that may influence students' writing achievement, such as motivation, teaching methods, or classroom environment. Moreover, exploring various research approaches and assessment techniques could provide a more thorough understanding of the strategies and conditions that effectively enhance students' writing achievement. Such studies would help educators develop targeted interventions to support learners in improving their writing achievement.

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